# TRUTH AND THE FAITH

HARTLEY BURR ALEXANDER

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# TRUTH
# AND THE FAITH

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AN INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

HARTLEY BURR ALEXANDER

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NEW YORK

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PRINTED IN THE
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# TRUTH
# AND THE FAITH

# I

TRUTH and TROTH are kindred words, and the resource of each is trust in fair-dealing. In the case of truth the action which prompts our confidence is the world, and more particularly the world when thought of as Nature, as distinct from or over against ourselves. In the case of troth, it is the conduct of men that justifies or betrays our reliance. This shift of object seemingly bespeaks also a difference in the qualities of these forms of trust: so that truth seems the more austere and troth the more feeling; and indeed this distinction may stand approved, although it is due rather to the impersonality of Nature as the supporter of the one and of human nature as the sustainer of the other, than to any deep-set divergence of truth from troth. The two are varying modes of one act of mind; their objects differ (though always with fluctuating boundaries, as to what is man-done and what by Nature); but apart from this difference of direction mind's truth and heart's troth are one in character. Both relate to an *inter*-action, a commerce or dealing, which for truth is of the mind with an ever-creating world of outer nature and for troth of mind with the ever-problematical conduct of men; and both repose upon a confidence that this

TRUTH

dealing will prove reciprocal and fair. In brief, there is no troth that does not resolve into a trust, no truth except as the expression of a faith.

In saying that truth is expression, obviously one cannot be meaning to say that truth is merely verbal or numeral formulation. These are not to be excluded, for each is mind's act, to be judged for truthfulness. But there are many other forms of mind's act that are expression, including all that is practically or imaginatively or yet emotionally undertaken; for to each of these modes of action true and false are applicable judgements. Furthermore, of the world's act, which is Nature, its forms are (as we say) expressions of law or constitution; they are *manifestations;* they are *phenomena,* bespeaking intelligible principles. All such fashions of speech are but ways of saying that Nature *is* expression, having a truth, or portraying truth, or being its own truth. No doubt there is doubleness in this usage: truth is thought of as *both* the law and its manifestation where Nature is our concern, as *both* the principle and the expression; and it is not wholly fortunate to live with such a confusion. Perhaps, were we to return to the analogy of troth, the meaning would be helped; for we speak of troth as being kept by conduct, just as we ought to speak of truth as being kept by Nature's conduct. Then we should the more certainly understand, what is clear where troth is before us, how truth is the intimate of faith: first, *that upon which we rely* in the

*the World, also, is an act*

*truth a form of faith*

world is its truth, and this is the genuineness of intelligible principles; second, *the fulfillment of our reliance* is truth, and this is understood Nature; and third, *what experience shall discover* is truth, and this is our confidence in the reality of knowledge. One might put it thus: truth is of faith fulfilled, faith is in truth anticipated, and of both our intelligible life is the expression.

*Plato's harmonic proportion*

Wherever we discover something which can be known as intelligible, there we are in the presence of truth. Recognized proportion, or harmony, of mind with its object, this is intelligibility. Human nature is complex; its facets are many, some physical, some rational, some spiritual; and to each of these facets there is a realm of reflected impressions, forming what, collectively, we name the world. Where these impressions become defined through recognition, there we have intelligibility, which may be physical or rational or spiritual; where they are confused and chaotic, there we have unintelligibility. We do not know whether the unintelligible is such of itself, and because chaos is actual, or simply because there is no proportion between our minds and that which confuses us; concerning this opinion differs. But of the intelligible we are very sure that it is something proportional to our own natures. It is only in connection with the intelligible that we speak of truth (where we are at all strict), and it is clear that there we refer to an act, dramatic between Nature and ourselves, in which

something from the world meets some facet of our being, and is lighted by recognition. When this occurs then we say that experience is trustworthy, but what we mean is that *the world* is trustworthy,—at least in so far as its character is recognized. It is exactly similar as between man and man: moral truthfulness is constancy of troth, fidelity; and so likewise every act which relates Nature and mind is a fidelity, and relies upon a troth. No philosophy can thrive in ignoring this fact, that every truth is moral in its constitution.

*science and morals*

It is known that in our day a cardinal distinction is assumed to lie between science and morals; science is said to be concerned only with truth and morals principally with the good. For the expedition of knowledge this may be recognized as mental convenience, but it is certainly not valid as a deep-rooted distinction. That conduct of mind which is science is but one of the many forms of conduct embraced within morals. Like every other concern of morality the affairs of science are inter-engagements of mind with object; the distinguishing factor is that for science the inter-engagement is of mind with Nature, whereas for the more varied relations of morality it is mind that is engaged with mind. But the difference is only assumptive, for since in science the result that is sought is the elucidation of an intelligible event of some sort (that is, the discovery of some proportionality between mind and Nature), in the end scientific knowledge must be

humane knowledge, and the truth of science a human trust.

We have said: there is no knowledge that is not an intelligibility; there is nothing intelligible that is not proportioned to the human mind; there is no truth that is not a faith, fulfilled or foreseeing. We now add: only as truth is worth expression (actualization in form or fact) is it discovered, and only as faith is moved by some image of the good may it achieve its embodied realization; then at once it should be understood how all knowing is ethical, springing from character, and how all truth is a patterning of some anticipation of goodness. This must not be taken to mean that falseness and evil are not present and tormenting and real in our experience, nor that in the world they may not be real and tormenting; but it does say that truth also is a judgement of good and evil.

*truth is judgement of good and evil*

NOW what is above written is said without argument, for this book is to be its argument. But first it must with certainty be said, for there are many who may not readily assent; and from such, a matter of so much importance should not be kept covert. Science in our day is assumed to be in some august sense the righteous custodian of all truth; and more and more morals is being given over in subjection to the scientific formularies. A whole world of thinking—political

*this book's thesis*

and economic, practical and æsthetic, even religious —has come to recognize the imperium of the modes of intelligibility utilized in the natural sciences, and to accede to these the prime mensuration of truth. That that world has gone wrong in all this, that the imperium belongs rather to the realm of morals, and that the lasting truth is assuredly *meta*-physical, this is our thesis.

*faith the life of mind*

MIND is itself the act of faith. Mind is faith in perception, in reason, in its own self-testimony; 'I think, therefore I am.' The only reality of which mind is essentially convinced is the reality of its understandings; the significant is its real: this is the credo which gives being to mind. We know very well that our perceptions are but passing materializations of our beliefs; we recognize, often uneasily, that the encadrements of reason are shaped to satisfy our pre-conceits; and we require no argument to perceive that the validity of all thought is the taking of a trust, out of the past, into the future. In its most realistic and rational aspects mind is a form of expectancy, a question seeking an answer, a confidence, an act of faith. And since, further, it is mind that proclaims the world to us (so that, conversely, we speak of the world as that of which mind is the reflection) we should know that the world likewise is an act and a faith. Included are the physical world and the rational along with the spiritual.

*faith a mode of being*

Faith, to be brief, is the mode of mind's life (also of world's being—at least, wherever the world's being is intelligible being). It is mode and it is cause. First, faith is the form and occasioner of mind; and second, faiths are the causes for which mind contends. This latter is what we mean by proving. Proof of every sort is the outcome of ordeal; but the object for which the contention is instituted, that which is to be proven, is from the first an article of faith, of which the accepted proof (once the ordeal is deemed satisfied) is but our conscientious persuasion. All thinking operates in this fashion: seeking fulfilment—embodiment, justification, forthfiguring, proof. Of course, all thinking does not satisfy its quest: there are satieties and wearinesses and lapses and wanderings,—and all these become reflected in our images of the anarchies and emptinesses which beset the world, and phantasmally incorporate themselves into it. But of the mind that is our trust and our understanding, the disasters of thought form no part. Truth is its substance.

*spiritual faiths*

THAT faiths are spiritual as well as physical and rational, none, I think, will deny. To those acquainted with the men of our day it is certain enough that multitudes among these concede little validity to spiritual faiths. The worlds which are significant to great numbers of the most learned and active are purely physical or ra-

tional; and men are quite unhesitating in asserting that any talk about the spiritual must be subordinated to these other faiths (though, to be sure, they seldom name physics and reason 'faiths', preferring 'fact', or some such term); and in the end, they say, the spiritual must be explained away by the physical and the rational. Everybody knows this to be the case; and it is only fair to make very emphatic that our time is one in which men of intelligence consciously and gladly give themselves over to the belief that the justification of all mind is in the materializations of sense-perception; while even among those who believe that reason must correct the gifts of sense, the last test of reason is itself sought in refinements of perception to be achieved by aid of instruments that delicately rectify our bodily imperfections or expand our purblind powers. When we speak of scientific method the glitter of laboratories gives picture to our thought, and the truths of science write themselves out to our imaginations illuminated on star-spun spaces.

*'scientific' observation is essentially correction of the personal equation*

But it may be proper for one who is, perhaps, not wholly a man of our time, to say that for him surely the act of mind is to be otherwise attested, at its highest. Among faiths it is possible to choose,—as those, also, have chosen, who make of the sensible materialization their prime reason, and, as do they, to condemn as distortion a faith which may not be found faithful to human experience. Many men have held that spiritual truth is the only expression

*humanism*

which is worthy of the human mind, and for the reason that it alone can satisfy the causes of faith, that is, give proofs. Among these have been such as cannot perceive in any nature, within man or over against man, a form of truth which goes so far as does the spiritual toward the center of that (whatever it may be) of which our lives are the expressed desire. For these, the humanists in the terrains of thought, men are justified in seeking the fountains of understanding in their own dispositions; and among such dispositions to name as the spirit of man those which are most distinctively human and hence to them at least are the most confidently attested.

Truth, then, is the expression of faith; faiths are forms of living; among these forms, different men and varying times give priority now to a faith which is centered in material sense and a physical world, now to the more refined speculations of rational science, and again to other dispositions, among which we name the spiritual. All these are faiths; but it is of the spiritual faith that we have here most to speak.

*Christianity*

THIS book's discussion follows upon the title *Truth and the Faith.* The truth which is its concern is that which should be most ruling in human life; or, to put it otherwise, that which is most significantly human, and therefore comes nearest to

the depiction of reality. And the faith of which it will speak is that which takes the form of spiritual truth, and is in fact our faith in humanity. But more particularly, in this instance, that faith is the Christian faith. Not that the Christian religion is the first or the only form of spiritual truth; but that it is such a form, that it is ours by inheritance, and that there is none more profound nor secure. If anyone seek to find here proof of falsity in other religions, or for that matter in the beliefs of science or of sense-minded men, let him at once abandon these pages, for such proof will not be herein contained or attempted. But if he be interested in what is real because it is noble in the Christian faith, then may the text be pursued with the confidence that this is indeed our quest.

## II

THE SENSE of sight is the prime assessor of human understanding. This is true of every level of our intelligence. It is true of sense-perception, for of all of which our senses give report visual qualities are what most assuringly create for us the sensible reality. It is true of rational insight, which whether systematized as science or caught as readings of a life's traffic gives its current inscriptions all to the eye. Of imaginative intelligence it is also true, for only as we speak of light within the mind can we make this form of knowing communicable: the act of imagination is like the sunrise, in each recurrence creating anew its world. Again, even on the level of our traditional intelligence—where we move always with much blindness—the only effective comprehension of self-discovery is as an illumination, an 'Enlightenment', in which a civilization that has come to maturity may gauge through perspective its own attainments. Finally, wherever men have sought to convey that which is least utterable of all understandings, the inward and spiritual, here likewise the inevitable figures are of Vision and of Glory. With truth of any sort for its concern, light is the one communion which we can certainly trust to intimate the central character of our experience, and with

all the verity that lies in words we may assert, at least for men, that to know is to see.

**Senses and sense-organs**

LET US see in what manner this primacy of light and sight as the image of understanding is attested, and first of all in the domains of physical perception. There is an ancient theory of psychology, long since incorporated into the patrimony of our common speech, which says of a man that he is endowed with five senses—sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The modern student knows very well that all of these senses are complex, not only each in itself, but the several senses in liaisons which may be more or less intimate; he knows that one ought strictly to speak of many senses more than five, and of the perceptions related to these senses as involving vastly more in the way of mind's endowment than the physical structures of the sense-organs can imply; and he is well aware that there is no sensation so simple or frail in quality that it does not gather into itself some complexity of before-and-after, some penumbra of mind's life. Indeed, he is settled in his confidence that it is the crystallizing past of experience that gives structure and meaning to the whole passing world of sense, converting light and sound, odor and temperature and motion, into the solidities and proportions which we sensibly perceive; each new moment of the perceived reality is a patrimony, an

inheritance, this he understands; and he is therefore entirely willing to say that we see with our memories of light and hear with our memories of sound, which are all that can kindle the present flicker in eye or ear into form and clarity. Perhaps, if he be a physiologist, he will go the further step which the science of our day authorizes, and accede also that the old notion of sight being mediated by the eye and sound by the ear today seems something absurd; whereas the truer statement is that it is sight which illumines the eye, hearing which shapes the ear—yes, physically, as the life of the crustacean shapes its shell—and that all that we mean by the evolution of organs is that their function is calling them into being and sharpening their serviceability; or, where the function is ceasing to impel life, permitting them to atrophy, like a mole's eyes or a man's molars. The last step is but one beyond this: an understanding that even in the realm of sense there is nothing stable except what is in process of creation; that sensible objects are acts, and that the perceived world is itself a deed. In sum, the old belief in persistent structures is superseded by that in generative functions; reality is genuinely creation and not simply some furniture of space. The eighteenth century taught us that *esse* is *percipi;* to this we now add, *percipi* is *fieri.*

*function shapes structure*

*phenomena of convergence (like function developed by unlike tissues, or via diverse phylogenetic types), or, again, of functional substitution, reparation, and re-education, are crucial as to the functional root of evolution*

But perception creates its objects on varying levels of conviction. Even as between the traditional five senses there is no approach to equality in

*sense-worlds, human and animal*

their several renderings of the real. There is some instruction in the saying, no disputing about tastes; for the point of the analogy is that the sense of taste gives us little clue to any reality that is worth communicating: for human beings, certainly, taste and smell have mainly only individual importunities; they serve the physiology of our bodies far more than the shaping of the body's habitation. Similarly, hearing, with its dubious localizations of the sources of sound and its perpetual preoccupation with the bodily tones and overtones reflected in speech and cry, is only fleetingly lifted into a more certain objectivity than taste or smell may yield: sounds are far more emotional than discriminative in their creations; they are the alarums and lullabies of our sensible existence, and fade readily into echoings spirited afar, whether by miles or memories we cannot say. For the animal kinds, we can be very certain that the subjectivity of these more bodily senses is greatly less than it is for us, in our man-bodies. Those who have observed dogs are abundantly assured that the canine world of sense is rich and articulate with scents and odors, far more convincing than sight, vastly more structural than touch; the dog's reality is diagrammed with smells, and most that is objective in his sensible life is aligned by spoors and trails. Analogously, for the browsing and forest-blinded kinds, hearing is probably a keener thing than vision; sounds are the path-breakers and the blazons of reality. As for the

*taste*
*smell*

*hearing*

multitudes of creatures that dwell in the film of molds and soils and sands, which for us is earth's thinned integument but for them is the universe, these (so we must judge) derive all the sense of form that is possible to them from the delicate contacts of cilia and antennæ, or from those ecstasies of warmth which summon them into buzzing life out of earth-damp or winter-cold: to all such the world must be a reticulation of contacts or a flux of temperatures. Typically, it is man, upreared from quadruped postures, or perchance the unvocal, stilted giraffe, who most shares with the soaring birds an acuity which converts the mirages of vision into perspective spaces and reads the reality given through sense as a creation of sight, and thus in light sees the prime gift of God.

*touch*

*temperature*

EYESIGHT, in a very precise sense, is the creator of *man's* physical world. For the human being, eyesight dominates taste and smell and hearing and even touch (in all its complexions) to such a measure that we may fairly say of it that eyesight itself is the *sensus communis* and performs the essential function ascribed in psychological tradition to this hospitable sensorium. With respect to the eye all the other sense-organs are secondary, for it is the eye alone that gives locus and order to the muddle of odors, sounds and tactile responses which shape themselves into the visible

**Vision**

chartings of bodily environment. The fact that the blind have their own articulations of experience is no rebuttal of this primacy of sight among men; for the blind, in so far as they are educated into the total life of mankind, are always under the guidance of their seeing fellows and associates, without whose aid they could not live and with whose eyes they literally see. *Fiat lux* is a veritable *fiat homo.*

*visual illusion*

Actually this is amazing, for no sense is more confounded with illusion than is vision. Form and color alike are without constancy; visual magnitudes are devoid of measure; every perspective is a mirage, and every sun's changes are as unforeseeable as the shifting patterns of a kaleidoscope. So everyday is this that we are accustomed to amuse ourselves with the play of visual appearances and to account their significance as æsthetic and as a kind of poetic fiction. Light is a magician, we say, which transforms blues into greens, or, following shifts of distance and of medium, resolves white into its rainbows; as for shapes and sizes and solidities and shadows, these are impudent liars which we must contrive to circumvent in that double reflection that is the mind's,—for the unaided eye avails us not. Nothing is quite so blatantly contradictory as our perspective world; its spaces are all made mirrorwise; its worlds are all of crystal; every movement distorts and every step shatters them. Indeed, there could be only delirium in spatial vision were the eye

not at once so speedy and so slow. Almost it is as swift as thought in its reconstructions of spatial order, and it is swifter than emotion or bodily movement. But it is not so swift as light is, and therefore its perceptions form themselves in series, which become discontinuous the moment movement becomes rapid: as one may readily observe in the flicker of diminishing images that show us the rapidly receding train-end, each framed in its instantaneous crystal of space; or, again, as one may observe in the flash into which spread the spokes of the swift wheel or the moments of energy of the lightning. The principle of vision is the principle of the cinema; eyesight-moments are what is recorded in its film, and the image upon its screen is our perspective world, in all its spaces and dimensions. Thus, suddenly, we realize that visual space itself is given us because of our blindness, because sight is too slow to follow swift motion.

*perspective reality*

Yet in spite of their shifty variety and purblind illusions the expansions of perspective vision give us the most convincing image of perceptual reality which we possess. Without eyes neither the magnitude nor the continuity of the world would have been revealed; we should not have invented measure nor have discovered the multiplied heavens; nay, the featured landscape of our daily walks would have been undreamed; there would have been no horizon, no position; and least of all could there have

been stable and apportioned 'things'. It is the perspectives of eyesight that give shape and order to the realm of things seen, and with all its illusoriness make over this realm into the scenic object which we call spatial reality. Precisely here is our paradox: the scene *is* the world, *is* the objective, *is* the enduring; even while we, physically and as living bodies, cannot enter into it, nor adjust ourselves to it, nor live with it, but are rather its expatriates and in every motion its destroyers! No doubt it is the contradiction inherent in the relation of eyesight to limb-motion which parts Nature into object and subject, a world and its observer, making of the latter an ungracious actor before a scene with which his genius finds no accommodation.

**Sight-touch world**

IF LIGHT had never come tyrannically to command mind into accord with its revelations, and if we possessed but those other sensible powers with which we are familiar, it seems evident that the only *world* we could have come to conceive must have been one composed of moments rather than spaces and of leaps rather than continuities. The threads and filaments of contactual activities, immersions in temperatures, gravitational pulls, sprawlings, climbings, heavings up and sinkings down, all these would have been our space-makers and our reality-makers; perhaps the jellyfish possesses some such world, and

it would seem altogether likely that for all floating creatures space must be thus intimate and fluid, and reality be molded of quality rather than framed in dimension. But the eye developed; and light commanded; and the human mind responded, accepting the visible as the simulacrum of the real; and no analytics of physical science has yet been able to weaken this most primary of our convictions: seeing *is* believing.

*motion gives the lie to vision*

And yet seeing is also disbelieving. Nothing is more certain than that we do not believe our eyes where movement is our concern. What act of faith could be more utter than that which prompts us to move forward into the mesh of convergences which define our bodily paths, expecting roads to visibly widen as we advance, doors to enlarge for our body's passing, and miles to lengthen out through the shallows and fogs of things seen. We rely upon perspective vision constantly, yet always in the faith that it defines for us a reality of which its every form is a distortion. The truth of this reality, we aver, the true space, is given to us never by vision, but only by that motion for which our name is measure. Over against eyesight is limb-motion, pacings and reachings, graspings and fingerings; geometry and number grow out of these movements, and from them springs the conviction that repetition is possible in a changing world. In place of the blocked-in continuities given us by eyesight, our sense of move-

ment yields a world composed of lurches and rests; and for a reality of forms is substituted the episodes of moving drama: the *scene* recedes; the *act* absorbs us in the stir of life.

Thus the sense of vision and the sense of bodily movement conflict and compete for the definition of reality, each creating a space of its own, the one perspective, the other literally geometric. The reaction of these two senses with one another takes the form of perpetual givings of the lie, each to the other, or, at best, of perpetual translations of the meaning of either the eye-made or the motion-made space into the forms and understandings of its sensible complement. Eventually, in this process, there grows up a zone of mutual testings and plausible co-operations, which becomes in the end the zone of maximum reality for all sense-perception. This zone is defined outwardly by the normal reach or stretch of our limbs in motion; it is defined inwardly, or bodywards, by the normal near limit of bifocal accommodation: in effect, by arm's reach and by what lies, as we say, in front of the nose. Whereever touch tests sight and sight tests touch, in one activity of the perceiving mind, there we grasp the sensible world at its vivid climax. The *real* size of an object is that which is seen when the measure is being exertedly applied; and it must be a measure that is commensurate with limb and eye, an arm's yard, or a leg's pace, or a thumb's inch, each keyed

*zone of maximum reality*

to an eye's dot; the *real* color of an object is what daylight reveals when the object is in hand, when it is *tangibly* present; the *real* shape is the form shown in the succession of eye-presentations which motion makes possible, each corroborated by hand-measure or foot-measure. All that is merchantable, even paced-out acres of land, is so because of this zone of sense-co-operation, in which our two most notable powers combine to make the world known; all that is more than shadow or mirage is so because at least in faith we believe it to be tangible and tangible under eye-observed intimacy. Where the senses agree reality becomes, in its moment, unshakable. *homo mensura*

None the less, the agreement is ever but a compromise. Sight at its nearest is less near than touch, and reach at its farthest is out of all dimension with sight. The shell-like periphery, a few inches from our bodies, where the dicta of the two senses rest upon common objects, serves to insulate our physical selves from the in-pressing context of the space-absorbed world; and it permits us, it would seem, that sense of freedom of motion, actual and possible, which segregates scene from actor, and makes of nature an object over against its occupant man. Yet here, too, where reality is most real, there is still essential distinction. All the liaisons of sight are with the intangible distances; all the servitudes of touch and motion are with the body; one is animated by attraction, of the light on the yonder hills; the

other by propulsion, by the exuberance of tingling flesh; and there is never aught but counter-sense in their inclinations. Perhaps, when we realize most clearly that we are blindest when our motions are swiftest and that our moments of clear-seeing are moments of bodily rest, perhaps when we realize that we must pause in order to observe, get our bearings before we act, look before we leap, then we shall best understand how sight and motion are most efficient in alternation and best co-operate by tacit surrenders, to each its moment. For the plain fact is that they do contradict one another, and that it is these contradictions which we name their illusions.

*how motion blinds*

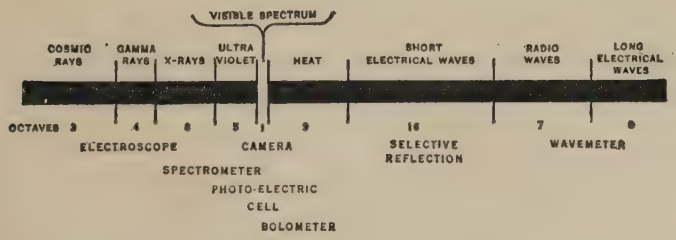
Here, abruptly, we face the fundamental significance which makes of sight our prime gift and of vision our surest understanding. The very duplicity of its truths, emphasized by the conflict with our bodily actions and our sense of motion, makes of the visual world an image and an allegory, a myth of the senses. It is at once the real and the illusory, the fact and the phantom. With respect to the physical world sight is the creator of its apparent unity as well as its spacious magnitude, though at the same time we are well aware that its powers operate only through a slim aperture and that the ranges of its continuities are but a feeble indication of what in thought we may imagine or through science infer. At the other extreme, in collusion with motion, sight segregates our bodies within the

*phantom spaces*

*in Plato's phrase sight is but "the clearest aperture of sense"*

spatial context, and charts for us the varied avenues of bodily movement. In so doing it creates the immediate image of freedom and possibility in action, and is the sponsor of that object which becomes significant as Nature, and of that subject which finds its physical expression in the independence of bodily acts and its mental realization in a meditation, which, again, we can name vision. Thus from the outset sight is the shaper of our world, giving it space and proportion, inner and outer, appearance and meaning; and this is true in a two-fold manner, first of perspective vision, which belongs to sight alone and is the creator of the expanses of the world, and once more of touch-seconded vision which gives form to the practical world and to the humanly manipulated realm of embodiments. In each of these modes seeing is heightened into allegory by the very contradiction which besets visible form. But beyond these there is yet a third intelligibility yielded in visual perception, and this is light itself, within the eye and within the mind.

*what eyesight perceives in relation to the totality of the energy spectrum is indicated by the chart below, prepared (1929) by Roland R. Tileston; indeed, physical science is on verge of saying that in essence its universe is light*



**Vision and speech**

LANGUAGE is shot through with terms descriptive of vision. Color and form, tint and shade, focus and margin, all such primary modifications of things seen are elaborated into a multiplicity of distinctions the vocabularies of which far outnumber the noted discriminations of all our other senses combined. The furnished and inhabited world is, indeed, almost exclusively the object of vision; and the names which symbol things (crystal rocks, animals, plants, clouds and stars, men's handiworks and God's) follow the unities picked out by eyesight from the continuities of the space-fast universe which sight reveals. Visible reality is intense and tyrannical—a veritable fascination and a charm, with the seeing mind for its victim,—and it is no marvel that its images become our *things,* big with actuality. So again it is no marvel, when we turn inward to the domain of thoughts, that there, likewise, we find vision imperious. The speech of abstraction counts its metaphors derived from vision by the many-score, and its familiar and used tropes are of this origin: the very kinds of abstract thought itself are known as *intuition, speculation, reflection, ideation, imagination, insight,*—all meanings given from the sense of sight,—while the descriptive classes into which things are for thought assorted are the ghosts of visibilities: understood objects are *phenomena* or *phantasms;* they are *forms, figures, features, facets;*

*tropes from seeings*

as written before the eye, they are *legibles* and *intelligibles;* and even when they are inward and affectionate they are still *idols* and *ideals, glamors* and *glooms.* It is only the language of muscled effort that can at all compete with vision in the force of its tropes: *act* and *fact* are doings and things done; *substances* are understandings and *attributes* are gifts rendered; placings and depositions figure in *synthesis* and *hypothesis,* castings in *object* and *subject;* and the whole moving impulse of verbs leaps into sensible consciousness as exercising muscles. Nevertheless, for last definition these, also, return to vision: every finis, every boundary, is in sum a horizon.

*tropes from doings*

It is the eye that most delicately distinguishes part out of part, and it is only the eye that can hold its distinctions fast in comparison. Succession and repetition belong to motions and sounds, but juxtaposition and superposition and all other modes of measure in last resort turn to the twy-seeing eye; eyes alone can testify to the likeness of two peas. In the end all our science is reduced to readings: if it be space, there are meters; if it be time, there are dials; if it be weights and pulls, there are scales and levels; for every motion there are arcs and trajectories, minutes and seconds of space, and for every computation of events there is a graph; the denominations of the stars are spectroscopic and the patterns of atoms are orbital; sound itself is given physical reality by an image of visible waves, and

*scientific 'truth' is always a 'reading'*

the world's energies by spaced paths or a motion which the mind can see. We have no form of knowledge called exact that does not rely for its exactitude upon fineness in seeing, sublimated into a fineness of visualizing thought. The explanation of this is no doubt simple: our eyes are gifted with a discrimination more acute and sustained than is yielded by any other sense. Thus it is that the universe remains for us a visible universe, even when it is unseen, and under our sun unseeable.

*theory*

Science, then, like the reality of sense, is the creature of vision,—not wholly, for our bones and muscles also speak in the formulæ, and surreptitiously so do our assimilative and generative functions and our wastings-away; but all these in the end become arranged in some chart or pictured order which is to be read—a chart which itself is the stated truth. Whether in theory (which is a seeing) or in scopic extensions of perception toward the great and the small, the full-orbed object of scientific thought is a visual cosmos and its apocalypses are uncoverings to the eye.

*uncolored truth of science*

It is true that colors—like scents and warmths, sounds and feelings,—are obliterate for the scientific vision. The object of scientific seeing is bereft, as its impulse is austere; it is concerned only for the shaped world, not the painted; and even this shaping is destitute of that breathing, enfleshed intimacy which gives to the sculptor's art lines that are emotions and contours that are in effect colors.

Science is jealous of its abstraction, and intent that its objectivity shall be flawless: and all this decrees tabu upon whatever in our bodies defies dissection or in the world touches the grays with uneven lustre. The pages of scientific truth know no rubrics: they are all in black and white.

Imaginative truth

BUT LIFE is written with many rubrics, and of its truths there are many that can be conveyed only by some art of illumination. Mankind has responded with an early zest to the impulse which creates for us, adjacent to the stony world of fact and the grayed world of thought, a third world which is consciously image and myth and consciously truth, and this is his cosmos of imagination. *Cosmos,* for the world of images no less than that of science is an ordered world, having its own structural art and its selections of the materials of sense. These selections are not, as are the abstractions of scientific thinking, ultimately keyed to a concern for movement and action; rather they are directed to an end which is quiescent and contemplative, the end which in its lighter phases we call appreciation and which in its more commanding form is absorption. Thus while the thinking of science thins and pales the object of its study, intent upon the bare bones, imaginative thinking causes this object to flush and glow with all the instancy that is in the sensible presence itself. Color,

sound, emotion, all the imponderables of science, are for the imagination its inevitable materials, and the world which it fashions is at once image and truth, image in that its elements are all symbols of the experience upon which they draw, truth in that its reconstruction of such experiences—whether in art or in æsthetic perception—abstracts them from the anarchies of sense and feeling. It is in this fashion that art illuminates our reading of life's meanings.

*its world*

In saying that there is a unique structure or cosmos in this imaginative world, different from and interpretive of the world of sensible experience, the reference is not primarily, nor even essentially, to the several arts, although these in their modes of expression do afford a kind of overt analysis of this structure. But simply, on its passive and receptive side, in the appreciation of beauty, whether of nature or of object or event, the world of imaginative understanding presents itself timbered and buttressed with an architecture quite its own: neither the reality of sense nor the truth of science squares with it; all its castles are in Spain, and its lords and its ladies, and their gesta, noble or mean, have a proportion to our natures which is independent both of the voracities of what we call the sensibly real and of the acute anatomizings which pattern the scientific residues of life.

*living time a kind of music*

For one thing, the imaginative world construes its own time and space. To each it gives dominion and quality, and it does not make of the one a dimension

of the other. Imaginative time (which in the end defines for us real time) is essentially univocal: it is a form of discourse, if one may so suggest, and its moments are rhythms; it is only imaginative time that has beginning and middle and end, or indeed repetition that may be incremental. At root imaginative time is a music, and the art of music is our conscious definition of it; for the whole domain of music, in polyphony and in harmony and in the patterns of the intonations of speech, is the one familiarly intelligible temporal form. This may be said with some emphasis, for in the equations of knowledge it is rarely taken into account that our sense of time rests more profoundly upon imagination than upon any other form of experience. It is for this imaginative time-sense that human life takes on its contour of the seven ages that pass from birth to death; for this, that history, whether of man or of nature, becomes episodic and therefore significant and at home with life; and for this, that Future and Past can tie meaning into the Now. Sensible time is momentary and chaotic, fringed with disordered memories and littered prospects; scientific time is mathematical, a dimension of space, stamped by number out of the blank continuum of physical energies. It is only imaginative time that gives articulation to thought, puts fate and fortune into events, and composes understanding into a music. Imprisoned in sense the soul of the philos-

*dramatic as life is dramatic*

opher will yet make music: such is the command of the god; such is the philosophic art.

*real space*

Now of space the imagination is also a creator. Physical vision yields us our kaleidoscopic successions of perspectives; mathematics constructs a space measured of motions, skeletal in origin; it is left for imagination to penetrate and overlook sensible perspective and to imbue it with the meaning of motion. This process (known as empathy) creates for us an æsthetic space which is the veritable object of vision, even of our physical eyes: for the seen universe of sense-perception is actually and always given its corporeality from the fact of its inclusion within the confines of a vaster and more orderly space which is the object of gaze only of the inward eye. It is neither sense nor science that tells us that the moon is solid or the mountain more than a mirage; only empathetic imagination can perform this miracle, and thus give cohesion to our conceptions of the physical world.

*æsthetic expression*

BUT it is not merely in this physical sense that imaginative vision frames its world. Motion resolves perspective into practical reason, by the aid of imagination, but in so doing it gives only a bodily familiarity with the spatial world. Emotional and spiritual familiarities are also to be won, and a reason that is more than practical; and this also is achieved through the inner vision.

Doubtless the most notable of illustrations is to be found in religious art, and especially in those kindred forms developed in the East by Buddhism and in the West by Christianity. What has been called Buddhist perspective is world-vision from altitudes. The genius of Buddhism lies in its exaltation through contemplation; spiritually it is a religion of the high peaks, whence the gaze is directed comprehensively upon the worlds of experience below, blind to the dwellers in their several cantonments, but revealed to the great arc of a diviner vision. Buddhist art looks down upon its worlds, or if it portrays the Divine One upraised before our eyes, He is nevertheless downwards-gazing, image of the contemplation which in Buddhist thought is the Great Compassion etherealized. But the genius of Christian art, while akin is but complementally akin to this. Christian art is an art of the high altar: the beholder is below, and upwards-gazing, and his attitude is that of reverence and adoration; Christian art represents an uplifting before the eyes, a hope which is native to the genius of Christianity. Whether it be a saint with raised face, a Calvary illuminated from some lancet of heaven, a Trinity with the blessed Dove descending, or the unsatisfied spire of the cathedral, there is always in the religious art of the West this repeating expression of a sense of altitudes into which man's spirit may ascend, there to find its glory. Love has for two of its forms Pity and Aspiration, and in the art of the two great

*Buddhist and Christian spiritual perspective*

redemptive religions of mankind each of these is translated into conscious vision.

This is only example of what in the way of spiritual meaning imaginative vision incorporates. High and low are converted into inevitable emblems of felt exaltation and abasement; dark and light become the antipodes of evil and good, of sin and sanctity—the sables of Sheol over against the ray and nimbus and flammula that crown the freed spirit. Color also—for the full glory of light falls through its prisms—becomes in this world an eloquence and a realization: the colors are symbols of the virtues, and in their mode they are a language; but they are also an externalization of emotion, cold or burning, gloomy or gay, quieting or exciting, and again fused into the many-jewelled portraitures and the multilighted fenestrations of thought. There is a kind of imaginative resolution of the light of vision analogous to its physical diffusion into spectral elements, and it is with this for his palette that the painter paints, and because of this that the poet may speak of his inspiration as insight and of his vocation as seership.

*color*

Thus the world of imaginative understanding is built into continuities of time and space which while they have elements in common with the analogous forms of sense-perception and of mathematico-physical thinking, are none the less, and in themselves a 'transcendental æsthetic' of a cosmos all theirs to shape. It is not a cosmos that begins with

*the truer Cosmos*

the outer senses, and it is not one which is product of number and division; but it is one which embodies in its moments and its particularities, all the hue and stir of our inner natures—melody along with sound, glory along with color—and in the breadth of its comprehensions grasps all that makes life spirited or nature dramatic. Further (and this also is portion of its claim to being a world unique), its reason, its sanity, puts the sources of intelligence, as our body provides them, into ratios that are quite other than compose into either the sensible or the scientific realms. For sense, we have said, the clamor of appetite is manifold and exigent: taste and smell, stomach and lungs, buffet for supremacy with eyes and ears and muscular energy. For science, all sense seems to fade out into diagrams and motions, the last dessications of vital form. In the imaginative world, while all these factors enter, they are in a totally distinct relationship, with musical sound and colorful vision dominating all other qualities. Indeed, it is the criterion of the imaginative world that it can discarnate the spirit in music, isolating it from every bodily suggestion, or again can incarnate it in visionary form, released from every temporal change; and it is this power which gives to æsthetic expression its profound adaptability for the expression of spiritual truth. In the end, all our greatness in art is recognition of such truth; it is faith in beauty, and it is the conviction that the ideal alone can impart reality to our experi-

*sense, science and art live each in its own reason*

ence of life. This is what we mean when we say that life is out-written with rubrics, and that its dearest truths are spiritual illuminations.

*recapitulation*

NOW, of imaginative understanding three things have been said: First, that it creates a world which is cosmic according to its own laws, and is free and self-directing; second, that the primary forms of this world are a time and a space which are vastly richer and more significant than can be any abstractly physical time and space, and which are the very breath of the being of the world of sense-perception; and third, that the symbolisms of music and art, which seize upon these forms and make of them a logic of the spiritual life, are for this very reason penetrating and powerful in the expression of truth, and especially of truths which may have no other communication. These things are certainly important in any study of religion, for which the experience of every branch of the human race has shown that music and art are its proper tongues. Religious music and ecclesiastical art, on any terms of approach whatsoever, are outstanding achievements of human living; their histories may be told and their forms analyzed, as they are seen in review; but the creative life that is embodied in them is a different and far more distinctive thing, and of this also, unto him who has the skill of their meanings, they are the communication. They are not

lightly to be read, but the enterprise is commanding upon all those who desire to share in man's discovery of spiritual realities.

**Inner Vision**

VISION is first a physical sense, and in the world of sensation it is a participant maker, contradicting and compromising with the other senses. Second, colorblind and unfocal, it is the last drab lumen retained for the reading of those charts of motion which constitute scientific knowledge—theory which purifies seeing into a lucency so diffuse and transparent that it can yield no picture. Third, vision is imagination: that power of mind's sight which in freeing events from their matrix of fact and beings from their encadrement of form first evokes for us a realm of the intelligible—of man-deeds and god-deeds, of havens, horrors, and stars, —and so makes the world humanly real. These modes of vision have been in review, and they are all related to the eye, at least in its synthetic and mediating function as definer of the scenes of experience and thought. But there is yet another type of vision with respect to which eye-seeing is but an analogical convenience, a trope for our readier communication of a difficult and inward mode of understanding.

*Intuition* is the name under which this fourth mode of vision is traditionally most known. Radically it is a mode of thought and not of sense, and

when it is spoken of as sight or vision this is merely by metaphor. Nevertheless, the metaphor is justifiable, for intuition shares with the eye's perceptions one notable character: the power of viewing its object at once with discrimination of detail and unification into coherent assemblage. Perspective vision is its natural analogy, for it is just the function of perspective to show us a world of related patterns, pictorially united, yet penetrated by sensed direction and anticipated dimension—significance for the body. Similarly, of intuition we say that its objects are perceived with the immediacy and comprehensiveness of sight and with such a sense of their bearings as sight yields in the physical world; but for intuition these bearings are not for bodily motions, but for the mind and spirit. So inevitable is the image that intuitive understanding is universally likened to a seeing and its object to a vision: when, therefore, we say that intuition *is* vision, it is because the word vision has taken on a new and independent meaning; it is no longer, in any degree, eye-vision.

*its light*

As intuition is inner vision, so its medium is inner light. Here once more the physical analogy is the source of the name, but the thing designated is not in the least to be identified with the light of sun and stars. On its most familiar level it is the 'natural light' and the 'light of reason', permitting us to see (as Descartes says) clearly and distinctly (that is, undoubtingly) the objects of thought, whether or

not they be accompanied by sensible images. Our power to perceive resemblances and differences is intuitive—the likeness of triangles, whether visible or ideal, the completion of the broken rainbow's arc, the sense of a discourse, the morality of an act, the justness of a conclusion: all these come to the stop which we call recognition of their completeness or truth in a moment of understanding which is its own last resort—is, in brief, a compelling vision, an intuition. The eye of the mind is the organ of this vision; the inner light is its medium.

The world's literatures have employed this similitude until it has been formed into a veritable dialect of the spirit of man. When Milton writes, "what in me is dark illumine," the centuries of men's words flash into the context, and we know that he is speaking not of sense nor of image-making but of the understanding of truths spiritual. Remotely we hearken Plato, speaking of the Good as the Sun of the world of veritable knowledge, infinitely more powerful than is our sun to bring revelation into the realms of purblind sense; and more nearly there grow radiant before us the great Oriental apocalypses, the fiery wheels within wheels that dazzled and exalted Ezekiel, the splendors of Zion unfolding before the rapt gaze of John of Patmos. These give meaning, and so also do the roseate pageants before the eyes of Dante on the Hill of Purgatory, and that most marvellous use of the image of light to be found in lettered books, the Paradiso, where canto

*Milton, Plato*

*Ezekiel, St. John*

*Dante*

upon canto the poet discovers undreamed of figures of glory to mark his luminous ascents. But most of all Milton's own blinded eyes give meaning to his words.

For Milton, as for many another, the dusk of the senses was the light of the soul. Poets and philosophers, through long generations, have made distinction of the two illuminations, and their testimony is not to be folded down into the insignificance of a non-scientific past, as some would do, for through them it is our central humanity that most profoundly speaks. "Indeed, my dear Ariste, since you wish it, I must speak with you of my metaphysical vision. But for that it is necessary that I quit these charming realms which enchant our senses and by their variety too much divert a spirit such as mine. As I greatly dread to take for the immediate responses of the inner truth certain of my prejudices, or of those confused principles which owe their birth to the union of soul and body, and as in these places I cannot, as perhaps you can, quiet a certain confusion which disturbs all my ideas, let us go hence, I pray you. Come, let us enter into your chamber, there to retire more readily into ourselves. Let us endeavor that nothing shall hinder us, one and each, from consulting our common master, the universal reason; for it is the inner truth that should preside over our converse." Thus Malebranche,—emphasizing obversely the conflict of the twain luminaries of sense and understanding, and making

*Malebranche, 'Entretiens sur la Métaphysique', I*

of the one but the allegory of the other. Plotinus, who was the spiritual commentator upon Plato as Aristotle was the intellectual, seizing upon the image of the Sun of that Other World, perpetually employs the idea of light to intimate his understanding: "Now the filling and perfecting of sight is due to the sensible, but that which fills the sight of intuition is the Good." "In this world sight, because it is light, or rather because it is made one with light, sees light, for it sees colors; but on high intuition sees not through the instrumentality of something other than itself, but through its own instrumentality, for what it sees is not outside itself. Intuition, therefore, sees one light, with, but not through, the instrumentality of another light. Hence it is that one light sees another, and so sees itself. Now this light, shining within the soul, has filled her with light, that is to say, has made her intelligent and like itself, the light on high. If you suppose that intuition itself resembles the mark or trace of its light impressed upon the soul, but is more beautiful and greater and more vivid, you will come near the nature of intuition and its object." And of him who has once passed from sense to intuition, and from perception of beautiful things to that of Beauty, and has risen above the chorus of the Virtues into the Glory which is the union of light with light, of the soul and its desire, he will be, says Plotinus, "like a man entering to the inner shrine and leaving behind him the statues in the temple, to

*Plotinus, Ennead III*

be, as he comes forth from the shrine, again the first objects to greet his eyes after the spectacle within, and his communion there, not with statue or image but with Itself. These, therefore, are a second spectacle, but the Vision was not in their sense a spectacle, but another mode of seeing." So had Plato said; and though in the speech truth struggles with the imagery, yet for him who would make the essay it is not undisclosed.

TIME fills many tablets, and one is written by a bearded philosopher and one by a lord prelate and one by the dear spouse of sweet poverty, and in many tongues they tell one truth.

*Bossuet, 'Traité de la concupiscence,' ch. xxxii*

It is the prelate who speaks: "I arose during the night, like David 'to behold thy Heavens which are the work of thy hands, the moon and the stars which thou hast fashioned'. What have I beheld, O Lord, and how admirable an image of thine infinite light! The sun advanced, and his approach was made manifest by a celestial whitening which spread forth on all sides; the stars were disappearing and the moon was uplifting her crescent, of a silver so beautiful and bright that the eyes were enchanted. She seemed to be wishing to give honor unto the sun in appearing clarified and illuminated on that side which she turned toward him; elsewhere she was obscure and shadowy, and a little half-circle was receiving, only there, a ravishing glow from the rays of the sun, as from the father of light. When he be-

holds her on this side, she receives a tint of light; the more his gaze falls upon her the more her brightness waxes strong. When he sees her wholly, then she is in her full; and the more she has of light, the more she does honor unto him whence it comes to her. But, lo, a new homage which she renders unto her celestial illuminator. In measure as he was approaching, I saw that she disappeared; the frail crescent diminished little by little; and when the sun made himself wholly visible, her pale and weak light dissolved, losing itself in that of the great star arising, into which she was as absorbed. One saw indeed that she could not have lost her light through the nearer approach of the sun which illuminated her; but a little star was yielding to a greater, a lesser light mingled itself with one more vast; and the place of the crescent appeared no more in the sky, where formerly it had held a rank so fair among the stars.... O God, Light Eternal, herein is the image of what comes to my soul when thou dost illuminate it. It is lighted only upon that side which thou dost behold; wherever thy rays do not penetrate there are only shadows, and when they are wholly withdrawn, entire are its gloom and failing. How then shall it be, O Lord, save that I recognize in thee the source of all light that I receive? If thou turnest thy face from me, black night envelops me; thou alone art the illumination of our life. 'The Lord is my light and my salvation, what shall I fear? The Lord is my protection, of whom shall

I have dread?' We are of those of whom the Apostle has written: 'Formerly ye were in darkness, but now ye are in the light of our Lord,'—as if he had said, 'Were ye of yourselves lighted, filled with wholeness, with truth, with virtue, and were ye of yourselves light, then would ye have never walked in darkness, and the light would not have forsaken you. But now ye know by your very separations that ye cannot be illumined save by a light that comes from without and from on high; and if ye be lighted, it is only in Our Lord.' "

The philosopher withdrawing from sunny gardens into his closet, the prelate meditating in the still hour that precedes the dawn, speak each with conscious allegory: alike for them the physical illumination is an image, symbolic of intuition but not its intimate. But in what is surely the most naïve, and is perhaps the wisest of all canticles, he of Assisi in the allegory recognizes also the truth of sensible nature. For *St. Francis* to St. Francis the sun of our natural day is precious not only because of its symbolic glory, but even more because its visible presence is also a visible presence of the spirit of divinity: outward sense and inner burn together in one revelation; and life—our earthly and embodied life—is in itself an entered Paradise. St. Francis is first of the naturalists, and of them all he is that one who most intimately knows that the separation of sense and reason is artifice and that the understandable world is created, not given. . . .

*Hymn to the Sun*

Dear Lord, highest and all-potent, thine alone be praise and glory and honor and all benediction .... to thee only they are due, and no man is worthy to name thee!

Praise to thee, my Master, with all thy creatures, and especially Sir Brother Sun, who gives the day and through whom Thou dost illuminate.... Oh, he is beautiful and radiant and of great splendor! and of thee, most High, he is the meaning!

Praise to thee, my Master, for Sister Moon and the stars! In Heaven thou hast formed them, clear and precious and lovely!

Praise for Brother Wind! for air and cloud and sweet serenity, and weathers all, through whom thou givest to thy creatures daily sustenance!

Praise for Sister Water, who is so many-useful, so humble and sweet and pure! Praise for Brother Fire, through whom thou dost illuminate the night.... How bright he is! how jocund, robust, strong!

Praise to thee, my Master, for Sister Mother Earth, who doth sustain and govern us, and bringeth forth her fruits and colored flowers and herbs a-many!

Praised be, dear Lord, for them whom thou dost pardon through thy love, and sustainest in infirmity and trial! the blessed ones whom thou shalt hold in peace, and who from thee shall be encoronate!

Praise, dear Lord, for Sister Mortal Death, from whom thou givest no man that he escape.... Alack for them that die in mortal sin! Blessed, who find that

through thy holy will the second death shall do them naught of woe!

Praise and bless the Lord, and render him grace and service with deep humility!

*'Minstrels of God'*

Ah, yes! we are the minstrels of God—as the birds are, and the annual fields, and the chanting stars, and Sister Mother Earth, and Sister Mortal Death! And we owe him joy and praise, and vassal's leal devoir.

**Sight and understanding**

PRECEDING PARAGRAPHS have lingered with the parable of vision in its varied aspects, first, because it is the most significant of all the images by means of which we convey meanings from one bodied mind to another, and second, because he who is willing to dwell upon its several meanings should find therein profound clues to what we can best know of the truth of the world, natural and spiritual. In the end, eyesight gives us more than a phantasm: it gives us the physical actuality, but it gives us this not as an agglomeration of more or less perdurable things-of-sense, but as a moving scene, glowing or glowered as its suns ordain, in which world-action and man-action responsively blend. Yes, even the empurpled hills *live* in the moment of vision, uniting seer and seen in one envelope of light; and the substance of the enduring rock becomes as the crystal and mirror of time. Sensible

nature is indeed an image, but just in that fashion in which life itself is an image, because in its current show are expressed character and fate; and this is to say that because it is an image, and only in so far as it is an image, it is also reality.

*realities are symbols*

Man's body is his book of revelation. It is imperfect, for his senses are few. It is confused, for they belie one another. It is malproportioned, for its limbs bear no certain ratio to space, and its breaths are but faltering counts of time. Nevertheless, from it whatever of form and substance we discover in the world is made relevant to the life we know and to the reality within which we move. We are accustomed to thinking of words as symbols, and it is not, perhaps, difficult for us to see not merely in men's expression in the fields of arts and religions and sciences, but also in such practical achievements as alter, in some measure, the face of nature, a symbolism of human life and its activities. But to understand that impressions and objects of sense are likewise symbolic in essence, and that nature as a whole and the world as a whole have only such a doubleness of being as symbols have, and that in this very fact of showing what they mean in showing what they are they attain their reality and their fulfillment, this is neither so customary nor so facile. None the less, it is just this that gives stalwartness to truth in making of it a faith. In this realm of physical symbols—'things', we name them,—our bodies are like a primer of letters, each act and func-

tion spelling out the simple familiarities which in the eventual readings hold most of what we can know. And it is as these letters, these bodily symbols, become written into the worlds of our growing perception, into nature in every form and every reach, from paces and pulses to light-years, that we come finally to interpret in the familiar language of bodily sense all that is held within the confines of perceivable creation.

*Matt. 6: 22-23, "The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness"*

But it is not only this translation of the outward realm that is facilitated by the bodily tropes; the inward and spiritual world answers to the same images. Were we to eradicate from letters all that is conveyed by the ideas of heart and breath and light, there would be indeed little but the bones of significance remaining. We know that these words are metaphors, and that their use is as parable, but we know at the same time that it is the only intimate and understanding speech. And when from the trope we pass to its meaning we are very well aware that this meaning must be disclosed only in being lived, and that we are trusting to the likenesses in human constitutions and to the unseen comradeships of human spirits to make of the image a designated reality. Here we exist, physically face to face; and each knows that our eye-world is a mirror-world, and that it is mind and not senses that gives reality to our conversings and to our being. So it is also in our relation to sensible nature; here too we are in a mirror-world, of which the meaning is mind, the

reality a spirit.... Aye, indeed, there are flaws in both, in the human realm and in the natural, flaws and terrors and unintelligibles: but in these our faiths are not set; in them is no light; they *are* the outer darkness.

*Lux Mundi*

LET us return, then, to the parable of light, in its most divine example, and to the parable of life also, in its embodiment the most divine: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

## III

JESUS

SUNNINESS is the one image that seems to convey, simply and directly, our impression of the life and character of Jesus. Strip away the glow of pageantry, like dream in early dawn, attendant upon the spotless birth, and cleave from remembrance the miasma of the Crucifixion, and there remains the body of the Gospels (which is also their life and spirit) portraying the three-year ministry of a young man, begun after the baptism in the Jordan and terminating in the pathetic jubilance of the entry into Jerusalem. It is these three years that are his portrait, and with whatever surmise they be considered none can doubt but that they preserve for us the most moving human image in the history of the Western world. In a manner which is amazing in retrospect the fates of nations and civilizations turn with them, and in a measure which would surely command awe could our imaginations compass the facts the inner lives of multitudes of men have swung to them as toward their zenith. As the morning sun creates its vision of the day, so the life of Jesus has created for the Christian centuries their vision of destiny; for this alone it is a miracle. Yet, entering in to it, when divested of its pageant

*in the accepted tradition, three years*

dawn and the dolor of its afterglow, the life itself is almost preternaturally simple and uneventful. It is passed in a remote province of a great empire, far from the purples and the triumphs; in its own hour it is of little bruit or renown save among peasant folk; even its minstrels are unlettered men, and of faltering comprehension. The physical happenings are few: there are pilgrimages along the footpaths of Galilee, with something about the traveler which so commands men that they forget their toils to walk beside him; there is a willingness to pause with men and women by the way, and to partake of their humble hospitalities; there are healings, for the Wayfarer was a physician in some sort, as it would seem more in the manner of the mind than of the flesh. Certainly, he was not professionally a healer; the cures are all incidental, and in the telling they are glossed with fantasy; the reputation was clearly forced upon him, without solicitation and against desire. Further, he does not appear to have been expressly a preacher nor a public teacher; he escaped rather than sought the multitude; when drawn into disputation it was with those who loved speech and came to him asking; and his answers were riddles. It would seem clear enough that he was no missionary in intention; he did not seek men, to change them, but was sought of them; and he loved his solitudes. One surely derives from the Gospel narratives but the single impression, that during these years called the Ministry the comings of Jesus were

*His character and walk in life*

*His profession*

*oral tradition probably carried the story of Jesus for a generation;*

*the Gospels presumably date: Mark 65-70 A.D., Matthew 80-100, Luke and John circa 100; Matthew and Luke rest heavily upon Mark*

like apparitions, not greatly differing from those which follow Calvary; and we are very confident—so little indeed is that which is noted down—that even of this period of his public career, the hours were mainly passed remote from men and from disciples,—as the Orientals love, in some self-lighted seclusion. The forty days in the wilderness with their visionary temptations picture to us one such period; another is on the Mount of the Transfiguration, where the disciples slept; and a third is in Gethsemane, where again the disciples slept—for into the world which he was entering there could walk no companions. The last event is the journey down to Jerusalem, along pilgrim-thronged roads. He was loth to enter, he with his simple band of followers, wondering and awed before the only city they knew as great and ancient. But a contagion of hosannas had seized the passionate crowd; and the local Greeks within had become curious about him; and the priestly custodians of Judaism were annoyed and uneasy; and there seemed to them (as He understood *must* be) one simple way to allay the popular zeal for a transient error—which is what the life of the man meant to them....

*of his executioners*

It is intelligible enough that those who tie their wits intimately in with the images of sense should come to believe that removal of the bodily presence must stay the advance of an idea. Persecutions and executions rest upon this conviction. It becomes of itself hysteria, and it develops into iconoclastic

furies directed against living bodies which are mistaken for the ideal thing their lives express, and are torn and dismembered as is the icon by the hand of the fanatic who is unable to distinguish token and meaning, sense and reality. Caiaphas was sense-blinded in this fashion, and Pilate stupidly magisterial, and the crowd fickle and fleet, like a changing wind. But was there ever in history the lie given more directly to this their philosophy! . . . .

*incarnation*

Yet in a sense which the executioners themselves could not have made intelligible they were true to their own surmise of the truth in directing their hostility to the destruction of the bodily man. The ideal which *is* Jesus is essentially that of the embodied life, the incarnation, and with the breaking of his body the pattern became mutilated, even if not destroyed. As with no other who has been called teacher his doctrine was his living, and the image of the vital man was his message to the world. Buddha renounced this world; Confucius was abstinent of the other world; and even Socrates, who more resembled Jesus, regarded himself as imprisoned in the realm of sense. But Jesus made of sense his revelation and of embodied living his gospel; not he, but Christians became ascetic. They, therefore, who crucified him (albeit for them truth was bodiless in its measures) moved with an instinct trued to their preconceptions; and in the changes in men's faiths which followed they were assuredly in part the victors, for it was they who made in-

evitable the transformation of the life of Jesus into an image in the World of Ideas.

**Embodied life**

EMBODIMENT, as by example Jesus taught it, is a philosophy of life. Of *life,*—not of space, nor time, nor material scene, nor of the Past as a charnel or of the Future as a destruction: dead matter plays no part in it. It is *realism* (as philosophers who are of the cloth philosophic might put it), and the reality which it lays clear is in the full light of the zenith sun. Indescribably it is bright, because beyond image or analogy it is intimate and understood of men. There is something fascinating and mysterious in the dumb trust which develops so readily among animals of totally foreign and mutually monstrous physical presentment, such that they draw gregariously together and find comfort and ineffable peace in close propinquity: a dog nestling to a man, not for fondling but for mute contentment and perfect trust. This is the miracle of domestication, which only evades our wonder because it has been so long achieved. And it is such another understanding—quite out of the range of ordinary description—that obtains for this white light of the life of Jesus: he is in and of a reality which we recognize, and for which there is no description save this recognition.

Certainly, it is *bodied forth.* This is what we may mean by incarnation. And its embodying is greatly

in the world of sensible things and forms. Just as in parable it is the lily and the sparrow and the fig-tree, swine and the burdened camel, the shifting sands and the stable rock, all the simple objectivities of eye and appetite, that must speak his meanings, so, of that subtler meaning which is the reality of life itself, that which speaks is its embodiment: the person, the human being, the living man. It is but the accident of the Gospels that we see the *life* of Jesus as a biography and as a tale recounted, so making of his personal being an heroic myth,—though if we look closer we shall surely see that the first intention of the evangelist authors was little for the rounded story, and much for the living presence. Indeed, in the Gospels themselves, in the accounts of his ruinous end on a cross that was to become Christianity's chief symbol, there is affecting testimony in the very despair of their grief and in their amazement before his emptied tomb that to his disciples and friends he was most, and most dearly, their physical companion, enfleshed and breathing and illuminated.

*St. Mark surely—although it is but fair to note that the strictly biographical interest in Jesus seems to have become fully conscious in the second generation; in the first years his miracle—as theophany—seized the Christian imagination*

Nor of the Gospel figures is it Jesus alone who possesses this vivid reality. He is the center of a community of simple folk who are lifted up, with ineffaceable distinctness, into an actuality which is more than physical or metaphysical, as if from their very association with him as central they derived a participant being. Obviously again this is no intention of the Evangelists; their minds were other-

wise directed; but life and personality were so germane to their subject that they could say no word that was not its portraiture and testimony. It is true that of the company of the disciples themselves only three or four live in the words which record them: they belong to another than the Gospel tradition, like St. Thomas wandering wide, in the imaginations of men, to earth's remotest lands, there to make mythical pauses and to set up and inscribe mystical crosses. It is true also that even the household of Jesus, yes, and his blessed mother, are shadowy, like the greater portion of the Twelve; and here again it remained for men to re-create in phantasy a flesh forgotten. But confining ourselves just to the period of the Ministry, the assembly of men and women there shown is strangely morning-bright in profile and clairvoyantly real in their humanity. Simon Peter and John the beloved and penny-minded Judas Iscariot, these are indelible as men; and that other John, the Baptist, who surely made more noise in the ear of Herod the Tetrarch than ever did Jesus himself; and those who are met by the wayside: a certain rich young man; the woman of Samaria; the Roman centurion who was a man in authority yet loved his servant and humbled himself because of this love; Joseph of Arimathæa who was a timid man and gentle and scholarly: incidentally as they may be touched upon, each is indelible, as are Mary and Martha of Bethany, and Mary Magdalene. Commonplace folk they are, all,

*from Mexico to Argentina are to be found the footprints of San Tomás Apostól*

but glorified out of the commonplace (even Judas) by the fact that He had discovered them as living souls, to be with him sharers of the incarnation. Even the towns where he rested, Capernaum and Bethany, and the well outside Samaria: there is something still and luminous and countryside about it all; it is set in the drabs of physical unimportance,—but the drabs are saturated into splendors, and like simple flowers, made sumptuous with sunlight.

*Greek portraits*

There are other ancient literatures which deal with men and paint characters realistically—the dialogues of Plato with their portraits of the wit of Athens, the martial panorama of the Homeric nobles, the grandiosities of kings and lawgivers and the flares of great prophets in the Older Testament. But of simple folk, commonplace folk, men and women who are no more to be noted than ox and ass, hinds and potservants, local wiseacres, petty thieves, husbandmen, housewives, tousled children —all those who make up the 'heads' of a Roman census,—of these is there any like magnification? such that they are seen as the deep vessels of humanity itself, as the creators of reality, as lives that are damned or redeemed, and *count* in the eye of God?.... No, there is nothing else like it in all antiquity; for here first was born respect for the human spirit just because this human spirit is itself the fullest realization that we can know of That-which-is, of a Truth which is a meaning and

*quest of humanity*

a Faith. Jesus himself was a simple man among simple folk; and suddenly, and for a world, he made of humanity, his and ours, something which could never again be simple.

**Reality as Jesus knew it**

WHAT IS reality, as Jesus understood it? First, and from the outset, it is not to be conceived as we moderns, imitating the earlier Greeks, conceive it, primarily as a bodily environment, nor is it to be approached through a discussion of things sensible. We have lived intellectually so long and so seatedly in this materialistic tradition (which is *the* materialistic tradition), that we forget that for all men and times outside the Greek-formed world the conception of the sensible world as a material reality, or as the core of reality, has never existed. Jesus is at one with the more universally human mode of understanding which insists that the approach is to be made from the vantage of the psychical (or spiritual, if you will), and which looks upon the sensible as a reading or riddle. Our bodies and their walking-places, our eyes and their visions, are for this approach not the actualities of walking and seeing, but the tokens thereof; and all the world of things which we see and amid which we walk is a world of physical parable, of writings, ours and God's,—and perchance also devils' deceptions,—which are to be read by him who may find the wit of reading.

*valid explanation is not to be achieved in following the law of parcimony*

Now it is an axiom of this approach that things are not to be explained by their simplicities nor is nature to be expounded by enlargement upon local analogies. To frame a world in paths of motion, electronic or stellar, is to achieve no more than the shaping of paradigms in the grammar of a cosmic tongue: the discourse and the meaning are not there. Or again, to assemble in the catalogues of knowledge discriminable objects and events, things and haps, is but to build up a vocabulary: the art of the poet must shape the song. He who would read to the heart of reality will make of science his grammar and of history his lexicon, but he will know them as laborious assistants, tool-books much-thumbed and slow, to his discovery of the shaper and the shaping. The Greek centuries have labored in this task, and the life of the text has evaded them.... But in the more universally human approach there is a wisdom not of the Greeks. Simplicities are seen as expressions, not as the seeds, of understanding; and the model which makes of meaning something full and intelligible, instead of being elemental, like a word torn from its context, is the most complex and fulfilled thing that we can know; and this is the personality of man in the height of his living. With this understood, at once the realm of things known is seen as the lettered pages of a book, of which the reality is never the printed or uttered word, nor this page and that, but always the thought which is deviously communicated through all the printed pages, and is the

genius of them all. The bodily world is our book; its meaning we call spirit, man's and God's.

*miracles are 'signs' ocular, tangible, restorative; 'miracles of science' are exactly on a par with the Biblical so far as power of persuasion goes; the miracles of Jesus belong obviously to a tradition of healing; whatever their fact, it is clear that for him they were incidental, tokens rather than charities; communication through words is itself greatest of miracles; cf., Matt. 15: 10-20; Luke 24: 45; John 6: 63*

The language of the parables and the tradition of the miracles (for healing is only another fashion of speaking through bodily symbols) are of themselves evidence that Jesus owned this conception of reality, and well understood that nothing which is sensi' .y cognizable is known save as symbolic, and that the world of things is linguistic of the spirit. Indeed, more than one of the sayings of Jesus give testimony direct to this understanding, and the whole doctrine of the Logos, in the writings of St. John, is its clear derivative. It is not, let us observe, in any wise such a denial of the flesh as we find in the expressions and thinking of Paul, to be taken over into a cult of Christian asceticism: on the contrary, it makes every avaliable direct employ of the imagery of environment and lays convincing and natural emphasis upon the speaking quality, the eloquence, of embodied things: the world of nature is for Jesus a world of expressed reality, and the expression is essential to the reality. If one were to consider this subtly, it is surely a testifying to the fact that for him the greatest truth of nature is its social and communicative being. This is not merely as amongst men,—although every saying of his is a saying unto the ears of men, and a recognition that in itself conversing is communion of being, much what we mean nowadays by social understanding and sympathy, whether in politics or in politesse or

in a church,—but for Jesus there was very clearly another communion which he valued even more, which he most realized in his solitudes, and which meant to him understanding of God. Prayer was for him a symbol of this communion; but we cannot think that this prayer was crudely in words; sunshine was a part of it, and the flowers and the flocks and the fields, and builded Zion. Many centuries later St. Francis understood this, as perhaps few Christians have so understood.

*the physical man*

And now, of this reality which Jesus lived and in living taught, there is another and the more important thing to say: it was for him most completely Man, as living soul, living person. Such life is intricately complex. It is habituated to a body; and in its dearest familiarities it is embodied, full of the wonder of eyesight and earhearing and of the elation and pride of limbmotion, and its breathings and its feastings are participations in a sensible reality which are its reality, and its spacious horizons are a participation. Also, its intelligence is participant: whatever is found to be fair with reason, or beautiful in another fashion, or is judged for good or ill, this also is of the life of man, and is the intimate of his personality: a life of the mind, we sometimes call it, meaning to say that in mind's life, too, is a measure, given in our surest self-familiarity. Thirdly, such life is humanly communicative, as between mortals: partly this holds with animals, whom we come to know as sharing our reality, but mainly it is

*human intelligence*

*man social and political*

with those whom our bodies salute in all human ways, so that they form a kind and a family within which we know ourselves to walk in life; when we speak of father and mother and child, when we kiss one another with our lips or our affections, aye, when we objurgate and condemn, all this is out of a perception into the closeness of fellow-being bound into our being. Fourthly, life's complexity, which is man-knowing-himself, embraces likewise those reclusions which fulfill themselves most with bodily quiet and a silence of the lips, and seek no discovery: inner light is our only word for them. All these are in the life of Man, and all these are essential to any understanding of the living reality.

*the inner man*

*πάντων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος*

POSSIBLY Protagoras, that puzzling lost Greek, may have wished to say something of this truth, and strove to express it, in his riddle, too shrewd for the Hellenes. We have only its challenging fragment: "Man is the measure of all things: of what is that it is, of what is not that it is naught." But Plato depicts him as one who would teach citizenship, and the goodness of the citizen, and we need not think that this citizenship must have been only in the Polity of men. For the Stoics, assuredly, it was also a birthright in the City of God, where men move greatly in the service of their own souls because their understanding is of the Divine Mind, and they are its kindled moments.

*Stoic Nous*

Protagoras, being Greek, will surely have taught that man lives most in his citizen-soul: yet this, which is the life that makes for good or for bad, this also is the life of the incarnate person, with the Polity for its body and some Council of Olympus for its ennobled image. There are moderns who make of such an embodiment, even now, their measure of the real at its crest, and in their vision of Man International find the peak of existence revealed....

*Mark 7:18, 19*

The understanding of Jesus moved beyond this. He accepted quite directly the native, even the physiological, functions of the body, as signal of life's complexity. He made use of every relation in the familiar and political features of human expression; and he thought, and expressed his thought, in images of a heavenly city and of a God who is a father. Of this latter image he was by no means first among men to make use; all peoples have called God their father. But it is true that Jesus employed this image more intimately and spiritually than had any worshipper of Zeus or Wotan or of Jehovah; at least, we accredit this to him, convinced by the whole burden of the text that in his central and personal experience of life divinity was known first and last as a fatherly love. We cannot doubt that for him also this love was the surest of realities and the most comprehensive of understandings: all else was its utterance.... Oddly, there is a converse of this devotion to the father, which is perchance more il-

*God as father*

*the mother of Jesus*

luminating than the direct expression. The mother of Jesus is mentioned with significance for only one episode that falls in the period between Bethlehem and Golgotha. He had performed miracles and had uttered parables, and "there came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." Even physical consanguinity is but the metaphor of a consanguinity of the spirit: men are children and parents and home-fellows not through natal propinquities, but through their participation in a single being which is Man, in his patterning after God, and in a single devotion which is a love more than neighborly or filial or parental, and is called by us divine. The idea emerges with a distinctness that is cruel in the command, "Let the dead bury their dead"; and for many of us there is cruelty in the whole burden of Matthew 10, with its abhorrent picture of familiar hates and its break with all natural tenderness, iron at the climax: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

*Mark* 3:31-35; *cf. Matt.* 12; *Luke* 8; *John* 2:4

*Matt.* 8:22

*Matt.* 10:37

In natal love there is threefold relation, twain parents and their child, symbolled in the Holy Family; and in the love of man and woman the relation is twofold, and its symbol is a Marriage, of flesh and of spirit; but we die each solitary, and is there no love that can attach to Death also, which is the third in the trine of life's festivals? Perhaps Jesus was thinking of this in the fierce sayings that command that we forswear kindred and home; certainly the monastic and celibate years have so read his meaning. But it is possible, too, that behind the words lurks another understanding. Taken flatly the passages imply an egoism that could hardly be tolerable even in a god—*the* egoism perhaps that has made Jesus thinkable only as a divinity, a 'Son of Man' who is God's body. And yet, there may be an interpretation that fights less with the parable of the prodigal and with tenderness for little children. Socrates also was no man of the domestic hearth, and his truer sons were not those who were offspring of his body: and yet at the last, "Think ye of the truth, and not of Socrates." It is no egoism of the man, beloved of his friends, that utters this; rather, the body's charioteer is before his eyes; and the speaker is the soul that has beheld Justice and Wisdom and Beauty, shining in perfection. There was a Greek ideal of what a man should be, a Hero whose nature we deem that we understand; and of this Hero Socrates was the son; in the Hero he beheld his kinsman, through the Hero he knew his

*men die solitary*

*egoism of Jesus—cf., esp., John* 5 : 17 *ad finem; and* 8 : 13-19

*Socrates in the 'Phædo'*

friend. Surely this was also true of Jesus, who would be Son of Man, not from a parent's flesh nor from a god's breath, but because he had discovered a Pattern Man who is our Hero all, in this shadow-haunted universe, and our warrant of Nobility, and our Troth and our Truth. In a novel fashion (as the world had till then gone), Jesus saw this nobility of man embodied even in humble people, in fishermen, sheep-herds, good-wives, wanderers, folk out of brothels and dens;—not that the noble was actualized, but that it was there, to be expressed in life, when the understanding should come. His faith was in the possibility of the humanity which is the birthright of the manborn; who *must* be animals if they at all exist, but *may* become true sons of Man, in mind and conduct humane, if the image of nobility be uplifted before them. In more than any Greek sense Jesus was a democrat, for he cherished a humanity that is finer than the political, and he made himself to be exemplarily the Son of this model the more divine, of which he saw in every man some gleam. St. John guessed this when he gave to the exemplar the name of Logos; for the Word, as he understood, was surely no less than man's humanity caught in the image of the creative thought. Almost immediately after John the conception of the Logos was broadened out into a great and splendid metaphysic of a World of Nature that is itself the breath of God and itself the divine Scripture. If blindly, yet persistently, Christendom holds to this doctrine

*the Logos*

*so Origen sees God as revelation*

even to this day: it is all that makes our naturalism convincing, all that gives morale to our laudation of science and its tasks.

*the Pattern Man*

JESUS was a realist. He saw reality as enfleshed, in material nature and in eventful history. But he saw also that the flesh alone is but an incarnation; it is the embodiment of that energy of the world which to him seemed best to be likened to the energy of a father's love, and which, for its fuller understanding, can only be known but with every human fibre that is of us: with pulsing body, with quickening mind, with passion and desire and will and whetted curiosity. Herein is the principle of all reason and the principle of all reality: humanity, alert and alive and culminant through the Pattern Man, of whom all men are sons. Of this Pattern Man he himself was to become the Christian symbol.

**Hero Worship**

ALL PEOPLES shape and incarnate heroes. To the human imagination it seems inevitable that some among mortals should embody and live those qualities of form and deed that seem most certainly to exemplify man at his highest. Why, indeed, should humankind exist if it be not to engender, once and again, the individual who in clear relief shall show us all the substantive mean-

ing of humanity? Vaguely often, but restlessly and insistently we men seek out in the lives of our fellows slant and glimpse of character that shall indicate to us that better which is the possibility of every short-fallen deed and the mould of every imperfect man; our belief is set in a human reality that is more, in beauty and goodness and force, than any which we find expressed, and this belief is so intense and guiding that we eagerly and recurrently build it into the personalities of heroes, ours to choose, ours to glorify. Sometimes the hero is deliberately fictive, where we consciously evade the pressures of incident that make up our routine reality and give ourselves in thrall to a world that is *willed,* shored up with *make* believe. When this is so, we emerge into drama, and move as in a mime, and our fellows and companions are the offspring of imagination leaping full-panoplied from letters or staged by the actor's duplicity, with which we are confederate; and we ourselves are just as the child with her dolls,—although it is to be noted that we, no less than the child, return never to the incidental routine with no change in our personality nor with no new thought in our action: rather, we are never again the same, for to make to believe is to make to act. But more universally the hero is fictive only in another sense: he is some earthly man caught up into the chariot, there to course more than man-allotted ways. Every human race pictures its own epic models, sires who are greater than sons can ever be, kings who are

*fictive heroes*

*men as epic models*

nobler than the dynasties which they found, sages who drink at the very fountainhead of the wisdom which they transmit, saints and holy men who talk direct with god; and every people with a discovered history lifts up mortals to be glorified, rendering their portraits with magnificence, making shrines of their tombs, illuminating their memories. We call these the great among mankind: and those *are* the great who show to men what men can and should become, lords and heroes, even if mortal.

*the hero militant*

Of heroes there are two central types, the military and the saintly. In the epic world of affairs it is the military hero that stands foremost in human imagination, and his virtues are physical as well as moral: he is an Achilles or a Hercules, irresistible in strength and skill, and he is also a pattern of what chivalry his people own. Courage, both aggressive and enduring, loyalty to his own heroic type, self-sacrifice where his friends are in peril or right is at stake, command and self-command,—these are the commoner virtues assigned to the military hero. But it is frequent to find these conjoined with the saintly virtues of gentleness and mercy, of renunciation, of illuminated understanding especially of the heart of man. Lincoln for America has become such a figure, in which the saintly is gradually predominating over the military; but the like effort to accommodate what may be two ideals is not infrequent either for historic personages—saints like Joan of Arc or St. Louis, prophets like Mohammed,

kings like Arthur and Alfred,—or again for those half-mythically emergent from the clouds of time who combine, as does Beówulf, valor with resignation to fate, or exemplify as does Roland a simple and feudal piety that lifts the man far above any self-love or self-seeking. In the chivalric ideal, finally, generosity, gentleness and purity unite with courage and troth to create the perfect knight, whose highest sanction in the end is his devotion to an ideal of which the emblem is the cross. Instinctively men enhallow their heroes, crowning physical strength with spiritual glories won through self-renunciation. Thus the military seeks in the saintly its ennoblement.

*the hero as saint*

On the other hand in the saint, the spiritual hero, the military becomes transformed. It is not merely that courage becomes fortitude, even through the martyrdom of the suffering body, but even more that it meets its justification in the conflicts of a tempted soul: saintship is not to be won except as a conquest. The battle must have been real, pugnaciously belligerent, and it must have lain between opponents that heal no difference through diplomacies: on the one side there will be moral ideals, which will be moral because they are difficult and their way hard, and opposing there will be degradations, moral and physical, against which the cleansing instincts of the soul must fight; it is oppositions such as this that make of the saints the soldiers of God and the heroes of multitudes of men and women

of all races and all times. It is true that the pattern of holiness has varied: it has been made ritual and therapeutic; it has been made ascetic and psychopathic, or even perverted toward bizarre luxuries. But among enlightened peoples there is consistency. Wisdom through suffering was its Hellenic highest; through renunciation its Oriental; through spiritual intelligence, purified out of material dross, its greatness for the Christian world. And the saintly ideal is *not,* mind you, any mere opposition of the spirit to the flesh; this is one of the phrases that too readily moves into a lie. All the art of mankind agrees that there are models of *bodied* humanity that themselves carry the imprint of saintly beauty and are themselves images of physical holiness. Greek artists, as the centuries passed, were fascinated with the problem of portraying the beautiful soul of Socrates through his Silenus mask, but no less the Hellenic gods themselves became spiritual, achieving their Olympian serenity, or, in the later day, the poignancy that comes only from the memory of struggles overpassed and a cloudy insight into futures yet unsolved: sadness is nearer than joy in the countenances of Grecian divinity, and the last breath of pagan feeling for higher things is not to be sought so much in the long lament of Pan enpantheonized as in the ineffable wistfulness and stilled pathos of the Medusa Ludovici. Asia has given its images of a divine humanity in its Buddha, its Kwanyin, Christendom in its Christs and Marys, and all the

*saintly beauty*

world in its myriad avatars of that saintly flesh which vies with the athletic for our adorations. Like a marble scarred with the fossil forms that startle again our imagination of the vanished life, so the image of the flesh stirred by the spirit holds us in thrall of a vision that is more than eyesight. When we are to deal with the *facts* about mankind, social or psychological or practical, here is a block of them, images of saints, as direct and bulking as cephalic indices or avoirdupois: the measures of the world are not limited to physical dimensions.

**the Hero of Christendom**

JESUS is the hero of Christendom, and whatever more than this he may have been no account of him can neglect this. That in his presence the old nationalist and racial heroes fade into fictive images is perhaps less intelligible to his own West than it should be to the still alien East out of which, as a man, he was born; for the East is not unfamiliar with the hero-teacher who knows no nation and exalts no racial blood. Perhaps the very fact that to the East he was less exceptional has made there his impression less vivid and his gospel imaginatively less compelling. But for the West none can move with its history without perceiving that his life marks an angle in time and that his figure is inscribed in every initial of our chaptered progress: Rome's passing, the transformation of the Barbarians, the Cathedral greatness of Mediæval

culture, the Great Reform which was also a great inner discovery paralleling the contemporary terrestrial explorations, the Mission zeal of the Modern World, ideal and commercial, and finally the black Conscience of Europe after its bloodshed, each and every one of these is inwrit with Christian words, and whether in mockery or truth with some confession of what Jesus signifies. No historian can neglect the man.

For us now, thinking as yet only of the Gospel narratives, that significance is both simpler and more complex than the showings of history. It is simpler because it is the one man, in the years of an actual life, that centers our attention; it is more complex because a man is always more complex than the sum of his images or yet than the totality of his influences. There are many portrayals of Jesus, and artifice is in many of them. This is unavoidable, and true also of other heroes; but it is not necessarily belying: life consists in *re*-creation. Certainly the twentieth century man has his right of reading for himself and representing to himself what manner of man was this figure so central in the history that has made our modern world, and in what, if any, sense, he can continue to be its hero.

*Christian meekness*

This means characterization. And a certain type of Christianity (from which we are perchance emerging) will make haste to utter the phrases 'meek and lowly' and 'loving Saviour', laying all stress upon the gentleness and tenderness and mild-

ness and solicitude of the man. In their own context, under Tiberius and with the whole world grovelling before the brass of empire, the elevation of these qualities did indeed possess an unheard-of significance. They shocked and outraged pagan sentiment: Who are these Christians? Slaves, simpletons, women, children caught with nurse's tales, the ignorant, the uncultivated, the powerless! But men who are what men should be.... for them there is only laughter and scorn where Jesus is pictured, an ass in a gibbet noose!.... It is precisely Nietzsche's criticism, in the nineteenth century,—certainly by then no novel thing, for it had been voiced, profanely and consciously, in the height of the Middle Age, by men who would have no more to do with a soft and weakling faith than would any later votary of the *Uebermensch,* Nordic or Greek: the gaiety of ermine and vair, the thrust of wit, the iron of the gauntlet, polish of blade, gold over sheath, life castellated.... the other thing seemed only a whining and a tomb-stench. Men rebel against a laudation of frailty, and for their heroes nothing is less tolerable than softness.... But in the day of Tiberius, long before Christianity had done its work of discovering beauty in simple and domestic things, there was audacity in pronouncing beatitude for the poor and the meek and the mourning, the unresisting, the peacemakers.... all who are dust in the eyes of the great. Possibly the audacity of the teacher is obscured in this case

*so Celsus, second-century critic*

*cf., 'Aucassin et Nicolette'*

by the burden of his words: we forget the challenging man in thinking only of his message—so strange in the day of its utterance.

*the Sermon on the Mount*

Furthermore the Sermon on the Mount has suffered vastly from the text-seekers. It is documentary in enblocked passages, not in sayings. Its first and greatest lesson is that which is the heart of Greek ethics: self-understanding and self-restraint. By the "poor in spirit" Jesus certainly did not mean the spiritually impoverished and the kingdom of heaven was by no means an inner obscurity: he was asking men to discover their essential humanity, and no definition of the task of philosophy or of the thoughtful life is more truly to the point. For the rest, he speaks against self-abasement, a man must be as a city set on a hill; he ridicules pretense; he condemns senseless anger, sexual uncontrol, surrender to hates, jealousy, unreason, servitude to appetite and material accumulations; and he detests cant and hypocrisy through and through. Actually there is nothing here that is remote from our contemporary ideals of what is implied in good breeding and a sane sense of values. Jesus was interested in commending an honest and cleanly life, animated by independent thought and emancipated from the petty tyrannies of things material and conventional. What he has to say is mainly simple homily in the interests of common decency in conduct and self-respecting integrity such as is prized by a man of character. It may have been more appropriate in

the older orient, accustomed to salaams and servilities, than to peoples of more upstanding manners and a freer sense of individual right; but if original, it is only so for its historical setting. The teachings of the Sermon are not miraculous; they have to do with the long-time saneness of human living. The obverse of it (in mood and expression, not at all in meaning) is found in the curses which Jesus utters against what he most despises, the pious cant of the Pharisees. Pretence he cannot endure, and his gorge rises at the mere thought of it. One may be a trifle shocked at his violation of what seems to us a simple respect for the claims of hospitality when, as Luke shows him, he accepts an invitation to dine and proceeds to disregard the bathing customs and to revile the calling of his host; but certainly there is no softling here—he is like another Diogenes,—nor is there any softness in his thrashing of the petty merchants, with "a scourge of small cords" (carefully prepared?), from the Temple,—though no doubt this could only have been done with the hearty approval of a favorable crowd.

*esp., Matt. 23*

*Luke 11*

*John 2: 15*

But all this, from both sides, the sermon and the curse, is plain moral teaching, such as any conscientious priest would give his flock, and it may be paralleled in multiple in communities Christian and Pagan. The meaning is not subtle; it is commonsense, open to men's understanding everywhere, and more or less instinctive with children, as Jesus recog-

nized. Were there no more to his teaching he would have been but a picturesque young rabbi, vigorous and independent; and no doubt would long since have been forgotten; for the making of a hero is not to be found in moral teachings, sane, but mainly negative—burdened with avoidances rather than (in the Greek mode) directed to attainments. But there *was* something else—the real thing which fascinated his disciples and aroused fear in the hearts of the Pharisees. He called it being 'Son of Man' and entering the 'Kingdom of Heaven'; but, after his fashion, he left the understanding of both of these phrases to be discovered by his hearers; and surely, in so doing, he showed penetration, for the meaning of neither title can be set forth in words alone.

*parables*

The whole matter is presented dramatically in Matthew 13. Jesus has uttered in public the parable of the sower, and his disciples, who are like children, come asking, first, not the meaning of the parable which they have not understood, but why his teaching must be in parables. Jesus is quite frank about it: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Clearly his gospel is *not* for all men and his teaching is, at the heart of it, as esoteric as that of the Orphic or the Mithraic or any other ancient mystery. Then he goes on (less frankly) to expound a set of analogies, the purpose of which is certainly not to show the nature of the kingdom of

heaven but only its selective character; and he adds other parables, and after one of them, the conclusion of which has been taken with horrible literalness by the most august of temporal churches, he asks, "Have ye understood all these things?" Most of all it is instructive that he makes no effort at correction when self-deluded they answer, "Yea, Lord."

*Matt.* 13: 49, 50

At first glance Matthew's whole chapter seems to imply a rather grim pedagogic jest (certainly its historical interpretations were to be grim enough!), but viewed from what to us must seem its intention it is not unintelligible. Jesus was a man of genius; his superb mastery of the parable-form proves that; and he was perfectly clear-headed as to what he was undertaking. He knew, as all clear thinkers eventually discover, that logos and apothegm are the perils of reason and that discourse is unwittingly traitorous to thought. Men *cannot* 'say what they mean'; their only hope through communication is to give to their fellows some hint, aroused by words, that may induce another mind to make its own discoveries. In simple and everyday matters (morals, business, astrophysics) maxims and formulæ are futile because they deal with rough-and-ready affairs; but where all fineness lies only he that hath ears may hear, only the seer discover the vision. Homiletics and mathematics are for the scribes, but where the Son of Man must live another understanding reigns.

SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING is in our day always in danger of falling away into a canting phrase. In earlier generations it could mean something quite explicit. Men knew spirits as realities, mainly invisible, but as possessed of their definable attributes: "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal"; and it was the invisible and eternal that was also significantly the spiritual. It was also specified that speech about the spiritual must be in tropes drawn from the temporal and sensible. Origen distinguishes (rightly, too) historical, moral and mystical meanings in the Scriptures: just as such exist in all writings that honestly purpose to tell us the truth: fact, application, value, would be modern words for what Origen meant. This method of conveying a complexity of meanings with one text became generalized as allegory; and it was quite as pagan as it was Christian in its uses. Plato (certainly master of the possibilities of analytic discourse) calls it myth, and employs myth whenever he would speak of complex reality; and Dante is careful to distinguish letter and spirit in the most Christian of poems; in the spiritual, or allegorical side, he includes both the moral and anagogical meanings, the latter being his equivalent (scholastically logical) for what the ancients found most readily thinkable in the less verbal emblems of their

**What is the spiritual?**

*II Cor.* 4: 18

*allegory and myth*

mysteries. In all such admonitions, as also Jesus in his own comment on parables, those who expressed themselves were striving to make clear that the historical and the natural worlds are but the fonted characters; the discourse is in men's souls. The Chinese put it shrewdly: He who would foster enduring growths will teach men, not plant trees.

*spiritual intelligence*

The spiritual in this more literal sense designates the realm of meanings and valuations which is what we live into as we grow in human experience: it is unseen because it is never, except by symbol, presented in the *nows* of perceptions and events; it is eternal because it does represent a realm, a world or domain of understandings: 'Ideas' Plato called them. But we are not content with this literal definition. Spiritual understanding is intelligence at a remove above the expressive, even the symbolically expressive. Jesus, clearly enough, looked into human nature with a clearness and canniness for which there was even for him no verbal exponent, and this clearness of insight also was accompanied by a sympathy which only enhanced its embodied loneliness. No one can really escape the conviction that he knew men's hearts, and primarily because he understood *man's* nature, for what it could be; so that he *was* in this supreme sense the Son of Man. There was in him a slant or level of comprehension totally out of the dimensions of the world in which his deeds and words were set. Just as in the best drama the hero is moving in a realm of thought which is hope-

*Son of Man —whatever its origin obviously Jesus employed this epithet to*

lessly remote to the dulled minds of those who share with him the action of the play, so here, in the greatest of historical dramas, Jesus walked in a world *of which* he was not, and his action was made poignant and tragic because he loved those of this world and would have lifted them into his own. He was a man at once sensitively intelligent and passionately eager where other men's souls were the stake, and he faced the tragic truth that only indirectly, through inspiration and chance kindling, could he possibly aid those whom he loved, to discover their own endowment. Parents are often in such case in the presence of their children: solicitous, eager, understanding, yet well-nigh helplessly dumb. And in every age, on the part of its uplifted few, this pathos of knowing too well makes for the spiritual hermitage and penitential griefs of those who beholding the world's wastes must yet keep their peace. It is here that the price of wisdom is tears, and it is because of this that in our recognition of the highest embodiments of spiritual intelligence there is always something of the tragic. Men's souls are shadowy in their kinships, but they are poignant.

*emphasize what is universal in man's nature on the side of its humanity —it is nothing mystical* (*cf. p.* 95)

In Jesus consciousness of spiritual reality takes on, then, another quality which we can only name nobility. There is no point in attempting its analysis, for it belongs to the man as a whole and complex being. The charm which the lover finds in his beloved, the friend in his kindred friend, is in each

*nobility*

case beyond any catalogue of beauties or of virtues: it is the kind of response which follows a recognition of the liveableness of two personalities sharing one body of understandings which neither can ever fully say. Rich personalities always attract in this fashion; using a poor physical analogy we call them magnetic, though a better term is 'spirited'; but the final word is never uttered, even though it is always seeking tongue and quivering on the verge of expression.... Personal things sometimes make writings clearest, and I, as I have been writing this, have again and repeatedly been compelled to turn toward a phantom of Jesus, grown man, in the attitude of a wistful child hovering with delicate fingers over a rose it dare not train.... lest the loveliness should vanish and the life die away.... So he, toward the souls of men; and some of them glow with the morning, and many flaunt and fade uncomprehending. There is this kind of tabu between teacher and taught, where the heights of understanding are the theme of instruction. The whole transfer is fragile and uncertain, and can come only with a sudden looking-up into each other's eyes in the moment of mutual comprehension. Jesus and Socrates never committed their teachings to writing, for they knew how mute letters must be; only their personalities could be eloquent, their likeness speaking.

*unvoiced teaching*

Now in Jesus the quality which I have called nobility, like that which is named spiritual intelli-

gence, is one to be directly apprehended. It has been so apprehended by all Christendom, but confused too much with the image of martyrdom, thorns and cross, for it can be seen, is seen, quite as vividly in the earlier moments and in the sun-bathed side of his career. Nobility no doubt emerges most unmistakably in the presence of peril or martyrdom, but we should not forget that it is first of all a mode of living, and that the nobleman is the creator of a life: heroes are men; their sufferings are only their provings. Jesus possesses throughout the quality of greatness, greatness in that intrinsic sense which gives its assurances in advance of its test. The disciples recognized this greatness, and it drew them; and we also recognize it, and are drawn by it. And we know it for that kind of human height of character and person for which our one word is nobility. He who in entering the arena of this world knows at once for what end men have been born, and from the first enlists as the champion of man's nobler part, he it is who possesses sublimity of soul, and it is he who commands our faith. We say of such an one that he knows God, and has been ennobled by his creator and sovereign.

*martyrdom is not of itself ennoblement*

*cf., 'Longinus, De Sublimitate,' xxv*

**The image of Jesus**

FOR EACH of us who will approach the Gospels as simple, human narratives, cleansed of the webs of tradition and freed from the distortions of the text-seekers, the image of Jesus will

surely stand out vivid and real and appealing—sunnily, like the clear reliefs of early morning. We will see him as a young Oriental, quick and sensitive, accustomed to the sights and sounds of a rural and village life,—the rasps and percussions of the carpenter's shop; fishermen busy with their nets; vintners with their vines; the noisy bustling of fowls; deliberate camels stringing along the wayside; lilies beautifying the fields; folk at their weddings and sick-beds; women drawing water at the pool; high people, bearded and turbaned; gay children and children tiring at their play,—and we will know that in these sights and sounds, human and natural, he finds his book and reads his wisdom. His will have been an excessively local world: it will have a background of meticulous law, wholly stylized; and of prophets whose words have been long mummified in thought; and it will glow with a dreamy Eastern aspiration toward a return of the bombastic and jewelled magnificence of kings who shall walk in palaces of jasper and porphyry and display themselves in fine raiment; but the margins of it, even in imagination, will be narrow and its horizons near. And yet, such is his sagacity, he will see the whole privilege of man in this one locale and man's whole destiny in the measures of his own brief hour. There is understanding beyond philosophy in his grasp of the bearings of this world, his wisdom of life drawn from its utmost simplicities; and there is a penetration more than of tragedy in the anguish of compassion for his fellows which from time to time sweeps over

*his local world*

him. He himself has seen into a beauty, a sweetness and peace of the spirit, to which these others are blind; and he longs to bring them into its loveliness and serenity—as into a quiet garden at once radiant and grateful with varied sunshine and shade. And yet he is helpless in any direct fashion: the only language he can know is the simple imagery of fields and flowers and daily toils, parables that to most men ring dull and riddling.... Ah, if they could but behold how all the world is a parable! and its meaning a love unspeakable!.... So he gathers disciples about him,—an easy thing, no doubt, in the vagrant Orient,—and he walks with them, wistfully enough; or at times withdraws into dear solitude. That he has schooled himself to endure human cruelty, this too we recognize,—so entirely does he comprehend the heart of man.

Let us ask ourselves, in all soberness, is there elsewhere within our annals another portrait that is truer to what man should be, or more beautiful, or more noble? His shining intelligence, lonely in its elevation, his still and dawnlike purity of character, his relentless penetration into black things, his pain for them, his full-aware courage, accepting the last chalice.... It may well be that we as individual men and women will not dare to ask for ourselves, in our lives and our day, that we be as one with him, undergoing all, comprehending all. And yet, in our adorations is he excelled? Do we not of a truth discover in him some better reason for being glad that humanity can set such a pattern? can vindicate its

*some say that he deliberately prepared to exasperate the Jews—martyrdom rather than teaching his conscious mission*

splendor against the great darkness of Destiny? Up from the glooms past, we cry,—*up!* But unto what if it be not some such elevation of our nobler image? We speak much of evolution in our day, wordily and blindly; but *innerly,* and for us, can there be such a thing as a 'higher' that is more than a 'later' in the movement of life, if this higher be not measured by some understood ideal of our own natures recognized as achieving its incarnation? To behold this ideal is to proclaim its reality, and to find its whole or near embodiment in a living man is to make our nearest guess of the image of divinity. Then do the scales drop from our eyes; then is truth seen to be faithful unto truth.

**His divinity**

WAS JESUS a god, divine? There is no evidence that his followers so thought him, previous to his death. To them he was a dear companion and a loving master, whose teachings they grasped with a conscious uncertainty. His words they prized, for they were words strange and musical with a new promise; and his faith in them as men astonished them, and inspired them. They felt, too, that in some fashion, not clear to them, he drew from sources beyond their imagination a strength and wisdom that lifted him above the commoner mortality of men. Their one analogy was in the prophets of their national tradition; certainly they saw in him no temple-hidden Jehovah,

no Baal-being stepped forth from his local hill: gods as the world then knew them, had nothing in common with this man, with whom they could dine and whose voice they loved to hear. Even after the crucifixion, haunted as they were by his phantom, they were still incredulous. The vividness of his image jostled with the vividness of their memories of him; they received a gift of tongues, and spoke with an eloquence that was self-confusing; others had to read in their words that they meant to say some new thing, which to them was like a sunburst of apocalypse illuminating vastly what lies over the margins of the world; they tried to invent names for it; and men whispered of gods come again. Divinity is a name for one of our readings of our own mysterious life. Intimately we know this life; intimately, too, we know it to be a mystery; and assuredly we need no forgiveness of reason if we guess that screened within its holy of holies there is the brooding presence of God. Jesus himself spoke of this presence as of a Father.

*out of it all hard after-ages contrived a theology*

## IV

CHRIST, THE DIVINE SON

MALEFACTORS before Jesus had been crucified, and the cross was only another form of gibbet. It was a form less merciful than the hangman's, for death came more slowly and with terrible punishment. The tradition of the Orient, for many thousands of years, had leaned heavily upon a faith in cruelty, as efficacious for the bringing of satisfaction to man and to gods, and perchance for the bringing of good. Lacerations and maimings were common enough as punishments, and legal puttings to death were with forms of torture in lands where from times unremembered kings had been impaled or flayed alive or roasted by unpitying conquerors and where the first-born of uncounted parents, royal and mean, had been offered up in the molten brass of Moloch. Strangely, whether it were monarchs in their scarlets, puffed with vanities, their nostrils swelling with the reek of torture while the tambours bellowed and the trumpets yelled, or smell-fêted gods above the butcheries,—strangely men had thought to find exaltation through the vicarious sufferer and their own glory through blood-letting. It was no animal food-lust that prompted sacrificial slaughter, but a human thing; for somewhere in the darks of generative time man had wakened to a

greedy understanding of his fellowman's pain and to a fierce determination the better to purchase his own bliss even at such cost. Thus, when imagination had made cruelty possible hell was created, and the scar of it lay lurid athwart the world. The cross was one of the milder forms of death-torture, as the Orientals knew them, and before Jesus many a man had gone down to the tomb in its agonies.

*love an emancipation*

Possibly his disciples understood (what is surely the tale of history), vaguely, that through word and example he was striving to summon the imagination to one more release of humanity, and to give men to perceive that by entering into the lives and the souls and even the pains of their fellows, to lift and alleviate, they could thereby themselves win into a more serene and grace-enhanced realization of human being. For love is only the better kinsman of cruelty, dependent like the latter upon a power to see beneath the flesh into the life and to become sensitive with another's body: but unlike cruelty this vicarious sensibility is not for the buying of one's own bliss with another's pain,—no, nor is love the giving of one's own body to penitence that others may find release, even though this self-sacrifice may indeed be love's incident; but innerly and positively, love is a thing more beautiful, a discovery of man's spirit by man's spirit, there at the point where, to each, human beauty is most manifest. If a man find in his beloved that which makes him cry for joy in his manhood, then love is won; and if it be that in

all men, or in Man patterned, he behold this greatness then is he like a divine lover, for he has found a faith, and *his* salvation. Love at this elevation is a social discovery; it is as an emancipation, loud with bells and gladness,—and the old dominions of torment shrink away into the outer darkness. Some of the disciples of Jesus seemed to catch this as his message: he had come to deliver men from their own evil, by transforming their understandings through a new acuteness, by redeeming their lives through a new sensitiveness to man's humanity. But mostly it was easier for them to fall back into the familiar dreams, the myths and the prophecies of the Coming of the Anointed King, and to see as in apocalypse the heavens open, and a new Zion, with the Prince of Peace for its ruler.

*how lives are transformed*

The life of man is shadowed with fears and haunted by many horrors, and deliverance presents itself to the imagination in varied forms. It is sought in soft comfort and physical well-being; it is sought in power and the pride of power; it is sought again and most passionately in political freedom, whether beheld as national destiny breaking its independent course or as the liberty of the citizen, man and man. But it is only last of all, and then uncertainly, that it is seen that the one release which can acquit the human spirit must come through self-mastery and self-cleansing; it must be a release which is also a discovery, felt as an ascension, perceived as a growing illumination—like a dawn amid

the high peaks,—and its effect will be as the dropping of scales from the eyes. If one could imagine in the moth, breaking from the chrysalis, a consciousness commensurate with the alteration of life that is being there wrought, it might be possible to find in this the image of what happens where man, singly or as a race, is transformed; for assuredly there are such transformations, and greatest among these is the rise out of the lust of cruelty into an understanding and love of which Jesus is foremost among its prophets. In the presence of such a change, feeling for the routine of life is replaced by a sense of miracle, and with miracle the whole image of the transformation becomes suffused. Small wonder indeed that the first Christians were seers of visions, and that the image of the Deliverer became haloed with a new and a more profound divinity than any that man had as yet known. A Messiah had in truth come, and men's imaginations found in him a definition of deity as well as the fulfillment of hope.

*among them, for example, Greek philosophy, coming as a veritable transformation of thinking*

**The Messiah**

DELIVERERS are vivid in the imaginations of all peoples who are in bonds or in distress. Helpless under evil, man naturally seeks some saviour, with powers to meet and conquer what men of themselves cannot combat; and as naturally man's mind personifies the lord of his salvation, seeing in such an one another like himself, capable of comprehending men's suffering and potent to re-

lieve it: the saviour is to come vested in glory but crowned also with piteous understanding of human need....

It is probably wrong to assume that the deliverer is primarily political. Men have been slaves and have longed for their emancipator; nations have been subjugated and have sung through patient centuries their hope of the liberator who shall renew their heroic life; peoples have been under oppression and have shaped all their fantasy toward the coming of one who shall show them the way and lead them into enfranchisement. It is natural, no doubt, that this dream of a deliverer should come most intensely to folk under the iron of a hard and alien conqueror, and should tend to the form of a vision of self-determination and of the restoration of vanished national glories. Herein is a motive that commands universal understanding; and, we might add, no matter how vaguely justified by the event, it was assuredly the source of whatever was of common assent in the re-mapping of Europe after the Great War. In ancient times, under the grim peace that was the imperium of Rome, Greek and barbarian alike looked back to glories and forward to restorations,—futile with a hope which gave many a city to sack. The Jewish messianic prophecy, zealous for the coming of a Son of David, who should be the Anointed King and should restore the ancient glories of the nation, was only one in the varied renderings of a single theme,—nations in captivity

*Carthage, Corinth, 146 B.C.; Jerusalem, 70 A.D.*

remembering some golden past. The idol of political freedom is indeed one for which has been kindled many an altar, and in whose name heroes have striven and domains have been shaped. Nevertheless, not this alone is the full explanation of the messianic promise, even for those with whom it has been most fully conscious as motive and expectation.

For even among pre-political men the dream of the Deliverer is well nigh omnipresent. The epithet 'Saviour' is attached to the names of multitudes of gods from before historic mornings; the legend of the golden reign of 'King Peace', who brought to men law and music and understanding, adorns the initials of every mythic chronicle, wistful for the restoration; and the Messiah himself, not alone as king but as the Sufferer for Man, knows no localization of age or continent: he is in the heritage of many a race and century in the Old World and the New. The impulse back of this is surely not altogether the idealization of the hero, for there are many heroes and many deities who are not saviours: it goes deeper, into some sense of human deficiency and peril, which we own just as being men and as inherent to our lot;—a sense of mortality, the classic poets called it, the tears of things human. The most that we can say of it is that among all peoples who have attained to expression, it lingers like a sob in their more spiritual records. Perhaps we can best understand its expressions if therein we learn to see the obverse of our idealizations; for the price of the

*in America from pre-Columbian times, still vivid in belief are the Indian Messiahs*

vision of the ideal is our shudder away from the pitiful actuality. Out of such a shudder is risen the messiah. Feeling their faultiness, and being restless under it, men sought its compensation; they longed for a cleansing, a purification, a transfiguration, which should mould them nearer to the heart's desire. Whether through saintship in this world or the achievement of angelic perfections in a heavenly realm, the compensation is to come—so the imagination sees—with the guidance of a Helper, man and more than man, whose Way is as a light cast upon the darkness. It is doubtful if there is any deeper conception of divinity. God himself is shaped of man's resentment of human imperfection.

*the conception of divinity*

BOTH of these shapings of thought, the political longing and the spiritual, were familiars of the mind of Jew and Gentile at the time of the advent. Innerly and outerly the old order of affairs had broken down, and the time was filled with rumors of prophets, and with vague yet intense expectancies. For the Jews, more than for their neighbors, the hope was political: they were a people distinguished for the singleness of their faith in historic destinies, theirs God-given; and in their imagined restorations the material glories of Solomon were no less in their mind than was the promise of another Son of David to renew Jerusa-

*Judaic destinies*

lem. But the Ara Pacis Augustæ was on the eve of erection, and even for the Jews other than political aspirations were mingling with their dreams of palaces and temple-turrets on the hills of Zion. In their mystical and apocalyptic literature a new name for the Messiah had come—the name which Jesus was to prefer for himself,—the 'Son of Man', and it was understood not as emblematic of a restored Judah, but as symbolic of a more splendid humanity which men were to discover, and likewise of a spiritual judgment which should justify the righteous. The Satans rule in the Abyss; they seduce and ruin mankind; but behind the screen is the 'Head of Time', he who is to come embodied as the Son of Man, calling the dead from their tombs and the Patriarchs to their rewards.... Men thought in terms such as these, seeking in a world of vision the redemption of what lay before their eyes.

*dedicated 9 B.C.*

*Daniel 7 : 13*

*Ethiopic Book of Enoch; Gospel of Nicodemus*

Among the Gentiles similar ideas prevailed. The Roman world of the first century had become cosmopolitan, and religion was everywhere seeking new forms. The older national religions were emptied of meaning with the collapse of the polities which they had symbolized; and more than this, new streams of human thought—philosophical and critical from the Greeks, allegorically metaphysical from the Orient,—had so altered man's mind that tribal cults and crude paganisms could no longer be significant even to the ignorant. There was a great

*"for the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom"*

and awakened expectancy in the realm of forms spiritual, and from every quarter answers were eagerly sought. Most important among the offered responses were those of the mysteries, now lifted into a moment which they had never previously attained. Out of Hellenic paganism all that livingly survived was incorporated in the mystery-cults, especially that of the Orphics; out of Egyptian, there lived little save the sacred drama of Isis and Osiris, undershot with a dim philosophy of an all-mothering Nature; while over the Orient margins of Roman dominion the invading cult of Mithras was bringing what remained of magianism, militant in its proclamation of the Eternal War of Good and Evil. There were other mysteries, but these three, the Orphic, the Egyptian, and the Persic, were strongest in men's imaginations. Further, they all possessed a certain community of idea, so that they were as separate embodiments of a single thought. For central in each is a god—an Orpheus, a Mithras, an Osiris,—who has become man, human avatar of the divine, that he may reveal the Way and lead mortals into immortality; wherefore he becomes a Teacher of men, and for them suffers mortal Passion, and gives his body to be torn and destroyed; yet this is only as prologue to the transfigured Resurrection, and his renewed glory as Lord of the world of the spirits of those who through him may discover their bliss. In the philosophy of the time the same idea was expressed as the descent of

*pagan mysteries*

*Way, Teacher, Passion, Resurrection*

a divine wisdom, a Sophia, into the muds of formless matter, there to strengthen whatever dim glow of the godlike might exist in human souls, and so to cause it to leap upward into its kindred æther, to unite with the creative illumination. *Gnostic symbolism*

History is too easily read when it is given a dynastic or a political or an economic or yet a physiographical interpretation, each as of prime sufficiency. The forces which sway men's ideas also govern their actions and shape their destinies, and among these forces some are still as miracle to us. Is any riddle more difficult than the synchronisms which cluster the births of genius? For example, is chance alone sufficient to account for the fact that Thales and Isaiah and Gautama Buddha and Confucius and the unnamed genius who invented the Maya calendar—each opening a vast chapter in man's intellectual and spiritual enterprise, yet each unheard-of by the others,—were virtual contemporaries, so that five blocks of mankind and three continents were awakened as in one dawn to live under new suns of understanding? Or again that Atlantic Europe and India and China and Mexico and Peru should *all,* untouched of one another, have achieved their renascences in a temporally single Middle Age? There may be rhythms in the ascents of mankind which explain these timed changes, but as yet they are remote from our understanding, and there is little prospect that they will ever be read in the terms which our present-day books would make command- *6th c. B.C.*

*A.D. 1100-1400 —some books indicate shrewder understandings: G. Montandon, 'L'Ologenèse humaine' (1928) and L. Daudet,*

*'Les Pèlerins d'Emmaüs' (1928), indicate each the discovery that evolution, physical and ideal, is actually via transmutation; history, natural or human, can never be made otherwise intelligible*

ing. It is yet another such problem which we face in the vast suffusion of men's thinking, in the first century, with eschatological and spiritual anticipations. Not only Christians, but others of many faiths, were to give their bodies in martyrdoms for the very vividness of what they believed and foresaw: and ideas that men die for are not to be erased from the motives of history. Mediæval Europe, looking back to its origins, could not less than see a prophetic divinity shaping the Roman Empire as the theatre of a coming Christianity and stirring men's souls, pagan and covenanted, with the unrest of a prenatal annunciation; and for us of the modern world, with a more remote gaze, there is still the great fact to be reckoned with, that the birth of Jesus came to an expectant world, eager to make of him its Christ. But of the hundred springs of this expectancy, and of the causes of their sudden welling, of this we have no explanation save mutation of the human spirit, and for it no name save Destiny.

*Vergil's Messianic Eclogue; the Sybils; oracles; the hymn of Zacharias*

THERE is another and a personal thing in the shaping of the messianic hope. The Messiah was to descend into Hell and lift up the dead from their entombment: "I am the Resurrection and the Life!"—such words were a trumpet.

*personal immortality*

There are many pages written to proclaim that the older Semites, and others among men, had little notion and less anticipation of a life beyond the

grave. Ecclesiastes is cited and the questionings of philosophers,—Hegesias arguing the propriety of man's natural dissolution; Epicurus yearning for the salvation of a release; Lucretius dazzled with the image of the eternally tumbling atoms, amid which a bodily life is but one of a myriad of forming and fading phantoms. In ancient times, as now, there were men uncertain and men convinced as to man's mortality, seeing only decrepitude before them, and a falling into the grave. But even Neanderthal man had buried his dead, and a hush, in speaking of gone souls, is in the voices of all men. Let those who speak with denial of this aspiration of mankind say it before the Pyramids of Egypt, or from Asia let their answer be the tomb of Mes-Kalam-Dug and of his queen Shub-Ad, with their stilled retinue of maid-servants and man-servants, of guardsmen and charioteers, of bullocks and asses—sent to maintain their glories before the gods who receive departed monarchs!.... In the reign of Augustus men were conversing eagerly of a life beyond the grave, and they would run far to see one risen from the dead or a prophet who would point them the Way.

*ὁ πειστιθάνατος*

*c. B.C. 3300*

BELIEFS and expectancies such as these animated the minds of the followers of Jesus as of all men of their time. Thought of the Messiah was in their familiar intercourse and rumor of prophets found ready hearing. Alike for peasant

*is Nature conventional?*

and priest, artizan and scribe, the time seemed big with portent, and the great and glittering of the world felt none too secure in their glories. The sweep of the Eastern mysteries on into the Western world is not to be explained except by this, nor the spiritual fantasy that was permeating the philosophies, while even in the new-come literature of the seated Romans there is obvious an eagerness that is not untouched with dread: a sense of peril is in Vergil and in Seneca, and in another fashion in Lucretius. To peoples in such a mind there is no bar between the natural and the supernatural; indeed, the distinction of the two is not present; and when expectation of miracle is familiar, the miraculous itself is in way of becoming the commonplace, while routine things (or as we prefer, 'natural') readily take on the unfamiliarity with which new modes of thought invest them—the lilies of the field, the hairs of the head, the sparrows that flutter in the snare. To put the matter radically: In periods of intellectual self-satisfaction routine is made the outstanding reality of a Nature which is thereupon built up of stabilities and well-polished conventions, and the mind sinks into the repose of the physical conformities which it pictures, as easily as a life-discarded body fits into its shapely sarcophagus; Natural Law then becomes as substantially founded, as unflawed, as monumentally grandiose, as the Great Pyramid of Cheops when the touch of a finishing polish left it to flash back its perfection to its

*in Vergil an almost trembling relief; Seneca eager under the ominous; Lucretius preaching salvation in science*

dynastic sun. But in periods when the imagination is regnant in thought, then, not the fixed forms of Nature, but the moving drama of History, cosmic and human, draws the contours of understanding; not conformity but alteration becomes the pattern of the seen reality; and with the eagerness that traces an unfolding plot, men follow the shifts and transmutations which spell for them their destinies; there is at such times no satisfaction of reason except in metamorphosis; each succeeding actuality *is* miracle, and only the supernatural, the unexampled, can seem to be the natural, that is, what is intimate through inbirth. For us, who are of all peoples deepest-seated in our sense of Nature's conventionalities, it may seem remote and fantastic to think of the natural as other than the commonplace; but for the first century, and periods like it, our attitude would have been equally incomprehensible: it would have appeared but as a morbid concern for old bones and sepulchres. Reason, or as they were saying *Logos,* found its dramatizations in a Time for which Space-settings were only the mirage. In such a world every event is fresh and every advent miraculous.

*Plato had long since spoken of space as a bastard reality*

**The Apostolic Christ**

MINDS framed in understandings like to these inevitably cast their thought into the modes of historic allegory, and the first impulse of the biographers of Jesus was to make of his life an

intelligible drama. During his life, no doubt, those who were his disciples, and daily walked under the spell of his presence, felt first and most the greatness of his personality and the intense reality of that patterning humanity which for him was the truth that justified his assumption of the title of Son of Man. But after his tragic death, and the strangeness of a hold upon their imaginations which made him still present, phantom-like, in their visible world, even disciples who had been closest to him began to see, not Jesus their teaching-companion, but instead another figure, filled out into the dramatic frame of prophecy and of eschatology, a figure for whom they could discover no name better than 'the Christ': just as all things that are beautiful in Nature, the moment that their beauty becomes intensified into a poignancy, are lifted up out of the heavy reality of physical things and into the frailty of their transfiguration, so the personality of Jesus, illumined with the poignancy of his Passion, became, even for those who had touched his body, a vision and an adoration. All men's memories of those whom they have loved, when death has sealed the physical contacts into the past, take on something of this visionary transmutation, and renew that love with a quality which is at once nearer and more remote, echo-like in its recession into uncontrol, but like an echo, also, trembling between the portals of sense and of song: so, out of our loves we create divinities.

*only after his death did Jesus become 'Christ'*

In the Gospel accounts of the birth and of the death of Jesus this filling-in of the dramatic outline

*the divine birth*

is quite apparent. The narratives which depict each of these episodes have, for each Gospel, a temper of their own, and they vary widely as between one another. Matthew is much more distinctly than the others messianic in the Jewish sense; he is concerned for genealogies, and for the legitimacy of the title of Son of David, and for the historical justification of his master's mission through the fulfillment of prophecy; it is in Matthew, too, that there appears (perhaps interpolated) the story of the Magi and of the flight into Egypt, the whole curiously meaningless except as an imaginative effort to satisfy old prophetic words and a restless expectancy of heralds who should proclaim the dawning of a light from the East, apocalypse and astrology blazoning the world with portent. The exordium of the Gospel of Luke, with its annunciations and its shepherds and its hymns of exaltation, is an opulent oriental poem starred with the glamours which were to inspire the later Christian art; for it is Luke most of all who makes of the Holy Family a living group and gives to the Virgin Mother that hour of supremacy which in the end is what crowns her, both in Paradise and in the adorations of her earthly worshippers. Certainly there is nothing uniquely Jewish in the third Gospel, but rather the enthusiasm that everywhere in that day had sprung into flame in the worships of the Mothers in the mysteries, with their culminating visions of a Sacred Birth which is also the birth that is a Resurrection, —all this translated over into the more idyllic modes

*Matthew*

*Luke*

*Isis, Demeter, Semele, Istar*

of the countryside life of the Palestinian communities: for in Luke Christmas and Easter unite, and there are palms and lilies for both festivals. A third narrative is strangely austere as coming from "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The first chapter of the Gospel of John reads as with echoes of much thinking, as if the author had long pondered the wisdom of the Greeks and even in the hour of this writing beheld his Revelation. "In the beginning was the Word.... In him was Life; and the life was the Light of men.... As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God. .... Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.... the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." The verses close with vision: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man!" The whole chapter is as the Genesis of the New Dispensation; and it is also the credo of Christian philosophy.

*John 1—the Gospel of John is metaphysical yet curiously like the meticulous memoir of one who had thought long upon the subject of his experience—Jesus still real as a man is yet transformed into a Christ: perhaps this Gospel answers its writer's own doubts*

Matthew is messianic and Jewish, Luke is mystic and Hellenistic, John metaphysical and Christian; but all of these, in contrast with the naïve and obedient realism of Mark, seem to be answering questions, and already to have entered the ranks of the Apologists. Contact with Jesus has receded into memory, and it is the Vision of him that they are endeavoring to understand, utilizing whatever their age of the world can give to make of it the central

*Mark alone shows a faith without question*

image of the high altar and the supreme disclosure of the new faith. The Divine Birth which is the Incarnation, the Passion and the Calvary, the Transfiguring Ascension,—these vie for the symbolic primacy, strangely suppressing into a second level of vividness the friendly companionships of the remembered Jesus. Ultimately, of these three, it is the second, the Passion-enduring, the Crucified, who becomes the Christ. It would seem fantastic, but it must be somehow deeply true to our instinct of humanity, that the demand for *sacrifice,* which is what is at the heart of the emblem of the Cross, should have proven more powerful and appealing than any sense of the grace of life or any hope of life's glorification: each of these latter is present in the symbolic trinity of cross and crown and dove, but the crown turns readily into thorns and it is the cross that becomes the sign of the faith. Is this but a calling for dramatic climax? In each Gospel the Crucifixion is indeed such a climax, completing the tragedy as after a Greek model and satisfying with consummation our awed sense of the spectacle. But an interpretation which asks no more than this would make the imperative of Christian faith to be purely æsthetic, as if the accident of the putting to death of an innocent man, having moved the world to tears, could thereby transform it. None can so understand. Rather, there was in the Crucifixion that which abruptly and terribly challenged men to a searching not only of their own souls, but

*the Crucifixion*

*tragedy or cosmology?*

of the world's being; so that they asked if wisdom is indeed through suffering, and atonement not alone man's but also God's salvation! if, in the very mineral of creation, there be not terrible iron! John, the beloved disciple, had asked this question; and it is significant of his answer that in his Gospel, alone of the four, the appearances of Jesus after the body had vanished from its sepulchre possess the same simple reality and human verisimilitude which stands out in the narratives of the days of the ministration. The Apostle of the Apocalypse had pierced with his gaze beyond the drama of sense into the realism of the spirit. "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

*John* 20:31

THUS CHRIST was created out of men's experiences; first, of their love for a man who had filled them with a sense of the confusion of their own lives and had shown to them the possibility of a new grace that might become the being of humanity; and second, of the strife into an understanding which would fit his image greatly into the frame of truths universal. They beheld him as a man who had discovered divinity, and they made of him the guide who should lead men, spiritually, into the divine presence. He was the Way and the Light; he was whatever in the world had been the promise of man's kind before any man was born;

*the Way and the Light*

and he is the promise that the trust of man in whatever of beauty and of nobility men have been granted to decipher is not to be as fantasy etched and erased on the beaches of meaningless change, but is indelible in the very nature of cosmos, and is substantial there where exists the only true substance which we can guess—in the structures that upbuild our faiths in domains spiritual. Christ is the troth that lies between humanity and whatever within the world is humanity's kin and parent: he is man's reason embodied, reason in that fullest sense wherein heart and mind and spiritual aspiration fuse into a life which is itself an understanding of God. And already in Apostolic Christianity, central in the Trinity was set the Divine Man.

*all civilizations are such structures, all are enterprises measured by ideals*

MANY VOICES have given word into Christianity, and through its inspirations dumb men, struggling after speech, have found their gift of tongues. As in contrast with the passionate eloquence of Paul—the stammerer!—the sayings of Jesus sound remote and stilled in their loveliness,—like the solace of the freshening waters of meadowlands as compared with the rush of the sudden torrent. And what Paul adds to Apostolic Christianity has something of this same torrential character, a bite and a passion touched with madness that is at least akin to the excitements and enthusiasms of the pagan mystæ. It is as following after Paul that

**Paul**

men are stricken as they walk, after Paul that they are stung with spiritual fire, in company with him that they harken callings, are possessed, are seized with compulsions, blinded with glories, uplifted, reborn, stigmatized, crucified of the flesh! The thing is no ordinary emotionalism, hysteric or hyperpathic; for Paul, when all is said, is still an intellectualist, and terribly matter-of-fact; his judgments of men and of situations are tragic just because to those about him they were so unintelligibly literal; he was seeing always to the heart's core, and seeing with burning gaze. But he was seeing, also, as one who had arisen from the grave, as like another Lazarus, with every phase of reality translated, the whole scenario of life new-ordered and new-colored,—"and what communion hath light with darkness?" There was *another kind of life* which he had found, or into which he had stumbled, and his epistles are a desperate man's struggle at all costs to make his discovery manifest. Most that is grotesque on the emotional side of the Christian tradition has grown out of the Apostle's failure to achieve his end.

*cf., I Cor.* 6:12 *et passim*

Pathos and tragedy concentrate in the person of Paul. He seems to have been the man who first discovered conscience; certainly it is he who first saw in it a personal responsibility and not a god's oracle; indeed, one might say that in discovering conscience he was thereby finding out man's share in divinity and at the same time divinity's most terrible prerogative. Conversion is a weak name for what hap-

pened to him in the blinded days, nigh Damascus. The conviction of sin and the illumination of grace into which conversion was afterwards to become ritualized is only a faint image of this patterning thing, which was a shuddering and tormented re-animation of a body that had become loathsome by a soul self-appalled. And the re-animation was forever after to be accompanied by impediment; the man moved with fettered limbs, and administered with manacled hands, and spoke with a blatting tongue. "The world is crucified unto me and I unto the world!" There is no more terrible description of a human situation in lettered records. *Gal.* 6:14

Surely it is this experience that explains the Apostle's horror of 'the flesh'. The Platonic Socrates is sheer in his distinction of body and soul, of *soma* and *psyche,* and he is unequivocal in his conviction that the body imprisons the soul and that death is a spiritual emancipation; but there is nowhere in his teaching any suggestion that the body is unclean or its alliance with the soul not in some sense a purification and a sanity. But the Pauline distinction of flesh and spirit, of *sarx* and *pneuma,* is uttered with another timbre of thought: "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," and already it is seen that flesh and spirit are elements that are at war and that the only salvation must be sarcophagic! Indeed, it is difficult to convey in English all that is implied in Pauline speech: as compared with *soma* and *psyche* for body and soul, *sarx* and *pneuma* im- σῶμα, ψυχή σάρξ, πνεύμα *Rom.* 8:8

ply shapelessness and mésalliance. The word *sarx* is heavy with pathological suggestion; it compounds into names for abnormal growths and irregular passions, into monstrosities and lusts, and the flesh which it designates lives with a generative being of its own; but the body which it creates is a body of death.

*Rom.* 6-8

*Oriental and Christian asceticism*

Christianity early made an alliance with the asceticisms that formed a counterplay to the orgiastic in Eastern religions. In matters of sex the Ancient World had possessed the unashamed nudity of Eden, and it had come to see all Nature, periodically, as a nuptial delirium, and out of its awe and its excitements it had painted goddesses and dæmons which were the phantasms of passions and begettings. But somewhere, through the gates of time, the serpent had entered; and in a revolt which was partly in shame and partly in terror men rose against their own bodies, and scourged them, and hated them: and there were hermits and anchorites, celibates and starvelings, purging themselves in the name of many faiths besides the Christian. It is plain enough that Paul, by temperament and experience, moved with this group. Jesus had been celibate, but in a mode totally remote: matters of sex, except for violations of the Law and of its spirit, had not seemed wicked to him; they had merely been *adiaphora,*—with respect to himself matters of indifference and aside from his preoccupations. But Paul is body-conscious to the point of proclamation,

and he is near sick with abasement and remorse: he is tormented with images which he cannot escape, and there are dæmons of obscenity in the margins of his thought. Indeed, the Epistles of Paul are much more self-confessing than most of the books which were composed with a more deliberately inspired purpose to betray the naked man. It is extraordinary that the letters of a person who is so deeply and consciously self-humiliated, who is therefore self-centered, egoistic and almost fulsomely self-justifying, should have attained to any authority in his world; it is testimony to qualities of greatness that they did so, and this not only where truly they are great, but even here where they are accident of his own private and misfortunate endowment. For the amazing and varied history of Christian asceticism, while certainly drawing heavily from some pervading instinct of the human kind, none the less derives most of its texts and expoundings from the words of that Apostle who was first among its tormented victims. It is an astonishing root, this body of a man, for a vast and ramifying growth.

*cf., Rom. 7:23, 24*

*e.g., the 'Confessions' of Augustine or Rousseau*

ONLY after we have seen something of Paul the man can we begin to understand his conception of Jesus Christ. For him the incarnation was no mere embodiment, it was a degradation which for any but divinity would have meant defilement.

*Christ Crucified*

"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh": the mere human form is itself an impurity, a thing for which atonement must be made! One is tempted to remember the Delphic saying of Anaximander: "The beginning of all things is the Eternal, whence proceed their births and their deaths by a Law which is Necessity; but in the fullness of time, one and another, they shall do penance for their injustices!" .... The Greek philosopher appears to be crying out that all finite existence is pride and pre-emption for which atonement must be made, just as Paul is demanding for the pride and pre-emption of the flesh its atonement. Yet for the Apostle the Incarnation is even more stricken with inner fatality; it is born of and suffers from no blind Nemesis, but is a dramatically personal deed: an act of God by which the Divine Son was given as victim and as sacrifice for man's salvation. In the foreground of his mind was this frequent and bloody image.

*Nature itself demands atonement*

Ancient altars, pagan and Jewish, reeked with bloodshed; and after the sacrifice there were feasts and communions, utilizing the flesh and the blood of the offering. When Paul asks concerning the cup of the sacrament, "Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" And of the bread, "Is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"—he is suddenly and entirely lifting the whole ceremony out of the realm of the symbolic and over into a magic which can mean transubstantiation. "Take, eat:

*the Eucharist*

*I Cor.* 11

this is my body which is broken for you.... This cup is the new testament in my blood.... For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death, till he come." There is no question at all about the imagery, and little as to the intention: the communion is essentially sarcophagic, for only as the flesh is consumed are the life and the spirit freed and bodies sown in dishonour raised to glory. Christ crucified is "unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness": and so must it remain for all men who cannot perceive, with Paul and Anaximander, that at the heart of Nature there is a dualism, and that sacrifice is a price of elevation.

*insensitive theology*

Certainly to the modern mind, more than foolishness! There is something repulsive in the insensitive theology which invites to the spectacle of a serene and omnipotent Father-God giving countenance to the bloody cruelty of the Crucifixion, and making of the chief Christian commemoration an image of slaughter. The Omnipotent is shown as both stupid and offensive; and Jesus, if he be consciously an incarnate god, is bereft of every glow of nobility, and made over into a pretense: unreal in his mission and sham in his sufferings. The drama of Redemption becomes a temple-show satirizing, like the tragedies of Euripides, divine stupidities and dishonesties. . . . But with Paul's conception, whatever our final judgement, we can surely

*Pauline dualism*

have some sympathy. Here is implied a metaphysic driving sharply into the heart of experience and proclaiming with a new voice the radical break that does in fact lie between bodily instrument and spiritual aspiration. The crux of all human tragedy is just in this, reasons of the spirit rising up in rebellion against facts of the flesh, man craving humanity, the soul seeking its light. Plato and the Persians had uttered this dualism, each in his fashion, but Paul makes it terrible with tragedy.

*Christian virtues*

FOR IT he brings one solace, Love. Jesus had taught loving-kindness and had made it divine; but for Paul loving-kindness becomes a passion. It is passion built upon dispassion; for at the basis of

*Charity*

*agapē* are cordiality and neighborliness and winning welcome and quiet affection, nothing shot with fire, but all graciously humane; 'love' and 'charity' are translations which never quite detect its meaning save as the contexts throw it into relief. But at its summit—and the summit is in Paul—this gentle and tender thing is caught up into a wave that is at once a universal compassion and a humble awe, as if God and his worshipper were united in a mutual and understanding gaze, the Great Being eager and solacing, the heart of man flown into an adoration; there is a tense moment ever hovering on the margins of life, where an access of power and a burst of revelation are about to unite into one sweep.

'Glory', I suppose, is its more Christian name, but innerly it is the winging of the beloved to the loving. Thing-name words and psychological jargons cannot at all give the truth of such experience; but Paul knew it and expressed it in a poem than which none in literature is nobler or more true. *I Cor.* 13

In this poem the Apostle uplifts into a trinity (*homoousian* in character) the three great Christian virtues of Faith and Hope and Love, forming the supreme mystery of the religion for living men. It is not that there are no other Christian virtues, for there are such. They are taken over from the more ancient formulations of human experience in Pagan and Hebrew morals—courage, temperance, justice, wisdom, generosity, obedience, piety, these and others; but at the same time they are given a fresh and Christian quality. Thus courage transforms into fortitude and long-suffering, temperance into an unworldliness which lies beyond temptation, justice into good works and good will, generosity into alms-giving and a spirit of helpfulness, and wisdom into the peace of an inner quiet: in every case the virtue becomes more intrinsic, less labored, and it is this surely that is conveyed by the adjective Christ-like, for it was just this inward and unassumed quality of simple human goodness that was most deeply impressive in the personal conduct of Jesus. Nevertheless, in all this (and here, again, came the flare of Nietzsche's anti-Christian zeal) there is something passive and reflective; the aggression, the

*cf., e.g., I Peter, which is ethical homily*

steel, has gone out of the Classic ideals, and Christianized they seem soft and over-tender; the fighting-temper is lost, and men demand a fighting-temper in their morality. It is just this that Paul supplies. Faith and hope and charity are inward and spiritual gifts, but for him they are also outer and cosmical realities, deeper with truth than aught physical; to attain them is to leap into the world's arena, and he proclaims the endeavour with blare as of trumpet .... "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" .... In the glow of such a temper steel is fusing and battle is on.

*fighting-temper*

*Faith*

Faith, which is the prime essence of this trinity (one in substance), is again with Paul no intoned credo. It is living trust, a responsibility assumed, given by divine grace and sustained only with divine help, but none the less *participantly* sustained by him who upholds it. It is of no consequence to say 'I believe' (words are cheap); all that counts is to live a visible truth, a *troth* which lies between the man and his own unpitying conviction; where reality is relentless, there faith is. After all, in the presence of the prætorian judge, with the circus roaring above an arena loud with lions, to say, *Christianus sum!* is a more magnificent thing than to turn back from recantation muttering, *Eppur si muove,* little as we reprehend the latter. It is only as we understand Christian faith in this sense, as a charge to be carried through with military singleness to duty and

*Martyrs for Christ and for science*

unabating loyalty to truth, that we can see in it that masculine and wrestling virtue which prompted Paul's triumphant cry to Timothy: "I have fought a good fight .... I have kept the faith!"

*Hope*

The crown of the inner trinity is Hope. Another name would be life, for the hope that it speaks is just this: that life, in its aspirations, is unconquerable. Certainly, the idea of it carries for the early and many later Christians a mirage of paradisal blisses, figured with choirs and thrones; but beneath is another quality, akin to classic grace, for hope becomes as a vestment bearing charm into every living moment: what the smile is, that sweetens companionship, this is hope in the substance of life: it is like a flush caught from a glory about to break, a tressilation of the freshening dawn ere the sun has surmounted the morning horizon.

*liturgical color symbolism dates from c. 1200, Innocent III; for vestments Faith's color is green; but there, where Hope is realized the Virgin is robed in blue, and this is art's convention*

Creatively it is to Paul that we owe the brilliant color-symbolisms that give tincture to Christian heraldry. It is not that he employs the conscious images, but that his epistolary phrases are, as it were, inwrit with a painter's illuminations. So that everywhere Faith is a green and sap-rich thing, nutrient and vital; and everywhere Hope is cærulean, lucent and clairvoyant as of a Virgin blue seen beyond the snowy summits of unworldly mountains, vistæd into transcendency; and where Love is mentioned it is deeper than any crimson, it is the living ruby shining with such wonder of illumination as must consume the chalice to transparency, and make

of the life a flame; man's body is the cup of the Grail, and love its burning heart....

Yes, at the end, the virtues purge and transform even the bodily flesh, redeeming the natural man from his natural loathsomeness. This could not be, of course, were they acquired virtues, like any others that a man might gain by cultivating them; but because they are truly and deeply another and a transforming *life,* in this world clung to with a kind of desperate precariousness, but beyond this blessed with the assurance of incorruption. This is Paul's meaning in the passages concerned with death-in-life and life-through-death. "I die daily," he says; and means it. "We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Thence, the splendid passage in Romans 8: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord!" A modern man might talk like that about the inevitable in Nature; it is the speech of more than persuasion, of more than vow; it is conviction riveted into Destiny. But it is also, and sweepingly, the rapture of a dying which turns out to be an uplifting into a glory transcendent,—theme of that most magnificently ritual of all Pauline passages: "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it

*II Cor.* 4:11

*vv.* 38, 39

*I Cor.* 15:36-56

die . . . . for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. . . ."

*Paul's metaphysic*

THUS, for Paul, the Christian virtues of themselves become metaphysical realities. They are actual *forces,* energies which transform and transfigure human lives, and along with human lives transfigure the whole body of Nature. Man natural is a blinded thing—like an infant animal with as yet unopened eyes; but when faith and hope and love enter into his understanding he is as one from whose eyes the scales have fallen and the vision rings louder than bells. There is *actually* another world, and this other, spiritual world is the only actuality; the flesh is but a curtain which waits to be drawn in a world that is of itself the Temple of the Revelation. This is the setting that makes conversion intelligible,—and it does not in essence differ from what any experience of metamorphoses may teach us. In his own blindness, before Damascus, Paul himself had been stricken, with unsolicited conviction and miraculous regeneration; the form which it imparts is the glad assumption of the Christian virtues, and in some fashion a sanctification—saintship rather than saintliness. Analogously, the flesh (which is the somatic form of all Nature, physical and vital) may be transformed into the spiritual, by the very discovery of its service as vessel and revelation of God's understanding: the flesh itself, the flesh and

*conversion is theophany*

the world, is a kind of scripture, which so long as it is undeciphered is a dead and evil thing, but being read is found to be full of life and beauty.... But this ontological description is only fragmentarily what the Apostle desires to impart. His great problem was not, What is *being?* but, What is the *act?* The drama rather than the stage is what enthralled his thought; he was a son of Hebrew prophets, not of Greek philosophers; and in this drama he saw only one central figure, his revelation of 'the Christ'. Not until we grasp unmistakably this intense activism of Paul's thinking can we understand either his writings or their vast influence in the moulding of Christian philosophy. It is the old dualism of Good and Evil, warring,—with a Mystery Saviour at the heart of it; with its sacrifice; with its tragic katharsis. The World's History, transfigured in Christ, is the Creator's Theophany.

*the language of truth*

MODERN MEN find it exceedingly difficult to think in terms such as are here but just employed. The words seem to float on their own vapor or to echo but a pious cant, and certainly they rarely get down to our kind of business. Nevertheless, if we are to understand even ourselves, we must find somewhere the power to think back into the experiences that have made us, and in doing so to remember—almost the more important thing!—that these creative human experiences are themselves fact of

nature and substance of the substantial world. In Paul's world every town had its mystery fane and its prophets—just as we have our banking houses and financial kings—and in days when slaves did the world's work and each constellation in the heavens was the parable of a metamorphosis, men thought readily enough in images of sins that were bonds and of wisdoms that were gained through suffering. The Apostle was speaking the language of his street, and it is only because life has been planning new walks for men that his speech seems unfamiliar. In his day his meaning could be true; and in our day it can be true for such as find the power to live beyond the terminals of their own day's journeyings. Nor can man ever afford to neglect the kinds of truth that spring from the lives of whatever age or people: all is precious to him who prizes understanding. Actually is there anything which is more a rebuke to our lightness than this: that men who had known the horror which was a Roman holiday, whose bodies had been under the lash and whose eyes were red with unacquitted pains, that such men should proclaim that the only reality in the world is love! "Show me a flower," cries Tertullian, "the merest flower of the hedgerow, and I will reveal to you the perfection of the goodness of God!" And the man had seen his dearest friends mangled by beasts in the Carthaginian arena! The thing is stupendous—something that we *must* understand.

*Paul's street and Tertullian's hedgerow*

**Christ as Apocalypse**

APOCALYPSE is another form of this thinking-through of things living, which for us seems remote. There is, to be sure, among our less literate and instructed minds,—persons of obscure sects and in the main of unprosperous lives,—a type of intelligence which takes avidly to the imaginative extravagances of apocalyptic books. The cosmographic wheels of the prophecies of Ezekiel, the strange dream-beasts of the Book of Daniel, the symbols and phantasms of the Revelation of St. John, all these are for such minds still direct with reality and as pertinent to the day's doings as are market records or court calendars. But minds like to these are only for our curiosity nowadays; we deem that *we* cannot learn from them. Hardly of a greater moment is apocalyptic speech in the mouths of the clergy; it is the rote of an ancient poetry, long-estranged and more or less dull; there are few Biblical passages that interest us less, and the images where not unintelligible seem infantile. Even as inspiration for painters they yield only lifeless decoration—not even faintly to be compared for reality with our screen pictures, and nowhere near so contactual with life. As a mode of literary expression apocalypse attained to the summit of its possibilities in the final cantos of the Purgatorio, eighteen centuries after Ezekiel; since then it has faded into the least effective of expressive modes.

*Dante greatest of apocalyptic poets*

And yet it was Apocalypse that gave his final

divinity to Christ. Men live by idols more than they guess, and of these none idol is more truly such than is the World itself. The personality of Jesus was intensely real; but it was also intensely dramatic. For the drama there must be setting, and none could be adequate which was less than the World, in all its eternities. Such, concisely, is the intellectual motive which seems to lie as the impulse to vision which inspired John when he was "in the spirit" on the Isle of Patmos,—although another inspiration, more moving than the intellectual and the only one direct in consciousness, is also attested by the phrase quoted. Whatever it may have been (for, were they of moment, we might make psychological inventions describing it) it gave him, like Ezekiel, to see "visions of God," and in them was a new vision of Christ as a god. He appears as a god of the old Semitic East, of Babylon or Assyria, a man with a golden girdle, with hair white as wool and feet like fine brass, with eyes like flames of fire and out of his mouth a two-edged sword; or he is a celestial horseman, multi-crowned, having divine epithets and a secret name, a war-god who "treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"; or again, he is a tender Lamb, redeemed from the sacrificial altar, "slain from the foundations of the world," enthroned with God. His attributes are stars and scripts and seals and signs and the letters of the alphabet, the beginning and the end of all things; he is surrounded by a council of elders; his

*bearded genii, winged bulls, sphinges, gryphons, crescent-crowned goddesses*

servants are vast angels, trumpeters of God; beings composite of man and beast move at his feet, and are the symbols of destinies; terrors awake when he opens his mouth; the universe crumbles at his nod. The images immediately suggest the struggles of the Oriental mind somehow to compass the likeness of a god that shall be man and yet more than man, and be leader in the huge conflicts of the Dragons of the Pit below with the Glory of the Lords of Heaven.

*cosmogony and eschatology in the Revelation of John*

Further, within it is summarized *the Drama.* "I am Alpha and Omega".... And the Alpha is cosmogony and the Omega is eschatology, not for men as individual souls, but for the Universe. The tenth chapter of the Revelation of John appears to be but another version of the ancient tale of the creation of the world, the Anarch entering in even with the beginnings of life; following chapters symbolically read out the annals of Time, and the histories of kings and nations, all shot through with a lurid vengefulness which makes the book speak as with a curse; and in the final chapters come the grandiose images of the Last Judgement which were to inspire the sculptors of the portals of a thousand churches: "A great white throne, and Him who sat on it, from whose face the Earth and the Heaven fled away.... And Death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works".... But even here, amidst all the grandiosities, there can be a touch of tenderness: "Behold, the tabernacle of God

is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people.... And *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!*" It is an image from the spirit of a disciple who had known and loved Jesus, and with it the simple reality of things human returns. Pity, if no primitive have never made of it theme for his art! the Divine Father, on the Day of his Judgement, comforting the hurt souls of his beloved, as little children are comforted!

*our astral idol*

In our day we, also, make us an idol. A scarf of nebula swept athwart the glass of space, mirage-like through its æons winding into spiral and ball and disk, forming star-clusters and galaxies, flaming up into remote glories and dissolving back into the eternal night; black planetesmal flows, like rivers in a shoreless ocean, stygian in darkness, atoms agglomerating and segregating, cellules of energies having light-years for their dimensions, self-procreant, and little whimpering planets where men crawl in their day, and are no more. As a God it is rather terrible, and in counterweight something might be said for an appeasable Moloch. Such is our idol, and we say of It, with John, that its names are Faithful and True, and on its thigh a name is written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!

**Christ as Logos**

ORIGEN says "the whole world ought to be regarded as some huge and immense animal which is kept together by the power and reason of

*Origen, 'De Princip.' II.* 1.3; *Plato, 'Timæus,'* 36

God as by one soul." Plato had said exactly the same thing. Even before the time of Origen (A.D. 185-254) Greek philosophy had seized upon Christian teachings and had created and interpreted dogma. Logical analysis had come to supersede apocalyptic vision and the formularies of the schools to replace the rituals of the mysteries. With what the Greeks gave to mind we still live; it is the working capital of our mental business. The Greek name for it is *logic,* the Latins translated this *reason;* but in each case, *logos* and *ratio,* it has to do with words and numbers. After Aristotle, so far as the intellect of Europe was concerned, the only form of thinking that was really to set standards was this word-and-number type, this logic and this reason: apocalypse and all visionary forms fade into the dream-intoxicated East; *science* is here, *phantasm* is there, we say; and theology was to become the Christian science. It was fated, whether politically because of the map of the Empire or spiritually because of the bent of the Occidental mind, that Christianity should become the European religion; but in order that this might come to pass its making over from mystery into reason, from phantasm into science, was inevitable. The Fathers, the Patrists, made of this their task.

Origen's was the greatest genius among them. Asia met Europe in neutral Africa, and Alexandria was the capital of the world's learning in the third century; and it was for Origen, an Alexandrian, to

combine almost fatefully the minds of East and West. From the Orient came an ancient and burdening conviction of the glories and glooms of history, human and cosmic; from the Occident a zest for concepts and measures and Roman miles, the universe converted into a vast and orderly camp. The Greeks had mapped Nature, but they had not been able to see in her changings more than a puerile repetition of perpetual motives—cyclic reduplications against which Origen argues with just scorn. *'De Princip.' II. iii. 4* For the Orientals the firmament was caught in the jaws of the Abyss, and its precarious moment was the whole dimension of Time; it was a writing blazed in letters that must be read as they were inscribed; fates to be interpreted. A sense of each of these modes (Space and Time, Nature and History) keys this Christian philosophy, shaping a new world-vision for the upcoming West. Within it, for the action's sake, was a new and creative endowment called *will,* central in the plot. The Hellenes had known nothing of this; but for the Christians it was to become all-significant.

The union of a Greek Nature with an Oriental Destiny (now a Providence, now a Doom) is the thesis of this new philosophy, and its first insistence was upon the vital character of Nature. Hellenic philosophers had given two images for Nature (their *Physis*) of which one was that of the Machine devised of rigid forms gyrating and journeying in vacancies—the 'dance of the atoms', still ours

*ἡ φύσις*

*Democritean atomism*

*Platonic vitalism*

to admire,—while the other was that of the living organism, knowing alimentation and growth and procreation. For the first of these, moral questions are non-existent, unthinkable,—so that we of today, who are atomists, make it our prime task to think away all moral realities. Christianity, therefore, having for its saps the conflicts of good and evil, almost of necessity seized first upon the Platonic image. "Amongst created things there is nothing which may not admit of Good and Evil, and be capable of either" .... Corporeal nature is "a kind of burden which enfeebles the vigor of the soul" .... but God has given to his creatures a hope, and "the whole of creation, receiving this hope, and looking for the fulfillment of this promise now, in the meantime, as having an affection for those whom it serves, groans along with them, and patiently suffers with them, hoping for the fulfillment of the promises." The image is wholly the vital one, and Origen departs from it only a hair's breadth when he recalls that the word *cosmos* means not only a 'world' but also an 'ornament', so that creation is not merely the expression of the divine wisdom and will, it is also the manifestation—even in its burdening vanity —of the divine glory; God's self-realization, a later philosopher might have called it.

*'De Princip.' I. vii. 2*

*I. vii. 5*

*κόσμος*

And now, of the Son? He who as a man had been Jesus and as a memory was become the Messiah and the Christ, is for Origen and the Greeks transformed into the Logos. John had used the name,

and had meant something apocalyptically metaphysical. Origen employs it and means that Christ is the Reason of the world and that his Incarnation *is* embodied Nature. *Wisdom* was the beginning of the ways of God and beforehand contained within herself the species and principles of all creatures, and it is she who is the Logos of God. The philosopher speaks of Wisdom in the feminine, for *Sophia* was already become as a goddess and a divine mother; but almost immediately she is converted into *the Word,* the Logos, and this is the divine Son. "The Son is also the truth and life of all things which exist," so that whatever may be predicated of the wisdom of God is appropriately understood of the Son of God in virtue of his being the Life and the Word and the Truth and the Resurrection; and his generation, as the only begotten Son of the unbegotten Father, is eternal and everlasting, and in brilliancy as the sun.... The imagery is returning to the parable of light, not that of a lamp, man-made, but that which is solar and celestial.

*I. ii. 3, 4*

*Platonic archetypes*

Metaphysically Origen's conception might be stated in this fashion: There is the creative Act, which is eternal, undiminished, unaugmented; there is the created World, which is the act forthfigured, and is to the Act as the Understanding is to the Will: these are at once the mind of God and the being of Nature, of which the one is like a ray of pure light and the other is like its spectral expansion, varicolored. But within this created world are

souls, reflecting fragments of the divine illumination —graces of the Holy Ghost which, as Origen says, is operative only upon rational beings, whereas the working of the Act and of the Logos is in all things. By dint of the divine grace men have their sparkle of divinity, and it is this which is their freedom and their understanding. To them the Logos appears first only as composed into the world of Nature; it is a riddle to be read, a writing of the everlasting Will of the creator, a Scripture prophetic and symbolic.... The idea is really not so far from our own, for we, too, see in Nature a puzzle to be deciphered, a symbol of the Law.... Other meanings of Logos are derived from Revelation.

Such is the metaphysical statement, and it has not been bettered in toward two thousand years of European thinking; alike for our theology and our natural science it is still central. But it is capable of another and a more dramatic statement, for which Origen's own forms are best: "God the Father bestows upon all, existence; and participation in Christ, in respect of his being the word of reason, renders them rational beings. From which it follows that they are deserving either of praise or blame, because capable of virtue and vice. On this account, therefore, is the grace of the Holy Ghost present, that these beings which are not holy in their essence may be rendered holy by participating in it. Seeing, then, that firstly they derive their existence from God the Father; secondly, their ra-

*'De Princip.' I. ii.* 8

tional nature from the Logos; thirdly, their holiness from the Holy Spirit,—those who have been previously sanctified by the Holy Spirit are again made capable of receiving Christ, in respect that he is the righteousness of God; and those who have earned advancement to this grade by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, will nevertheless obtain the gift of wisdom according to the power and working of the Spirit of God." This is the language of the Christian theologian, seeking to combine in one concept the moral and physical universes. Within it the persons of the Trinity appear in rôles that suggest the *archai* of early Greek philosophers or the forces and energies of our own moving cosmos. But within the Trinity itself God, as the Act, and the Holy Ghost, as Divine Grace, are little more than metaphysical moments: it is only Christ, transfigured into a Logos which is the World of which he is the Redemption, that outstands as vast and significant; the Reason of Nature is his substance, but his deed is the heroic one of the Light-Revealer, the Divine Wisdom descending into the Abyss. In the doctrine of the Logos Christianity is Europeanized, made Greek with the Greeks; and Western intelligence is at home in a new world.

*in Christian metaphysics nothing essential is added after Origen—not for theology nor for science*

YES, *at home,* in the linguistic and logical and mathematical council chambers which were to house the governors of the Occidental mind. The

*caution, anent logic*

Hellenes had refined logic out of grammar and had shaped ratio out of number; they had formed mathematics and had foreseen mechanics and had set up the fences of the several sciences,—surveying the whole domain of intellective activity for its incoming pre-emptors and claim-takers. The Romans, as politicians and engineers, had made a first vast application of law and mechanics; and, transposing Greek terms into Latin, they had rifled the Hellenic store of its readiest plunder, the niceties of speech discriminations. Then, in their trans-Alpine period, came the Scholastics and for near three centuries within the narrow circle of their theological problems they polished and refined, and distinguished and split distinctions, and subtilized conclusions with reservations,—all "breaths of the voice,"—until at the dry close of their time they had fashioned for Europe the surest and most delicate of its instruments of precision, its speech scientific and abstract; and had enseated *reason* in a new and commanding mode at the center of every vulgar tongue. In rendering our obeisance to linguistic symbolism and in making of our logics the high measures of all our truth (the discriminations of number are only a dialect of the discriminations of verbal symbols), we should yet hold us ware of their sources, remembering that ours is only a local—and possibly a temporary—registration of human thinking. Other times and peoples know other modes; and we also, where our tongues are less loud.

*our vocabulary of abstractions is gift of the Scholastics*

Theology, when it had assumed its episcopate, had transformed Jesus into an abstraction which only the most resolute and inspired minds could think back into its realities. A kind of mythos of Christ had been created, showing him first dramatically as a heroized man; and again deified as Christ Soter, Lord and Saviour, as a humanized god; and in a last apotheosis theologically as the Logos, the sum of the reason of the world. Thus, he who was central in the Trinity had in his own person become triadic.... Yet all of this was still within the literary, the word-formed tradition. It was eloquent only for doctrinate minds. For the mass of men (who have been never even in Europe as yet Europeanized) there was here little that could hold their sense of reality. They were of those who could touch the hem of a garment and be satisfied, or with ecstasy could kiss the trace of their own martyred blood sinking into the sands of the arena.

*Christ himself a trinity in the lettered tradition*

For them another Christ lived. Even yet we are wholly at a loss to explain *why* Christianity conquered the Roman Empire; the fact is there, but it is a fact without comfortable reasons. Certainly the *words* cannot explain it, whether they be the *logoi* of Jesus, or the epistles of the Apostles, or the apologies and principles of the Patrists. A little sign, a palm, an ichthys, an Agnus Dei, meant more (if we may guess) than any rote or scripture could mean to the numberless souls who were the dumb and unlettered of the Christians. But back of these,

*symbols and dumb souls*

beyond shadow, lay an experience which somehow or other was transforming humanity, and it was expressed in a mode of its own which in the long run has been the most convincing in Christian tuition.

**Christ in art**

GREEK imagination it had been which first had dared to see divinity in the human form, pure and untouched. Gods which were jackal and ibis, cow and bull, lion, hawk, eagle, serpent, or any monstrous compound of these or of these with man-form, after a hesitating moment, were brushed clean from the Hellenic mind, and in their place man's body itself was idolized. The delight of the release was no less than its suddenness: as in one morning the Greek artists etherealized marble, and the majesty of Zeus, the serene beauty of Apollo, the enticing loveliness of Aphrodite, came like a glorious awakening from a haunted dream. And then, when humanity had been shown godlike, came the play upon man's pathos, which is the history of sculpture from the fourth century on. Dancing merriment, suffering and even the shriek of it, wistfulness, studious reflection—all these bring to mind the forms of later Grecian marbles in which they, and a multitude of other moments of living and dying, are caught by the fascinated artist. An eloquence beyond rhetoric had been discovered, and its masters set themselves dear problems: as, how should be portrayed, in the very stone itself, the beautiful soul

*the one generation of Pericles achieved it*

*B.C.*

of a Socrates behind the Silenus features with which nature had endowed him. Here, in itself, was a problem which epitomized the whole achievement of Greek sculpture.

*early Christian art*

In comparison with the radiance of this pagan beauty the Christian art of Roman times is crude and little illumined: it came after the zest of the discovery had passed. Nevertheless, it came into a world which for the more part was still splendid with its marble classics, everywhere moulding men's affections with their glamours. The Jews, we may suppose, where they were at all strict to their Law, forswore image-making, and turned away their faces from the shops of the statuaries; and it is no doubt in part due to this Judaic aversion for images and icons that we have so vague a tradition as to the human features of Jesus. But those Gentiles to whom the faith was carried were of another custom, Greeks of Antioch, Latins of Rome, and they loved their images of Christ,—catacomb frescoes, reliefs on sarcophagi, statuettes, silverwork and goldwork, chased or wrought. There are no certain reflections of the actual man Jesus in this early art. Indeed, in the second century the Fathers were already with some acrimony debating the question as to whether the body of the Incarnation had been a beautiful or an ugly body, for there were some among them who maintained that the beauty of the Saviour, like that of Socrates, was wholly of the soul, and that in person he had been unhappy or

*Justin, Clement, Tertullian, Origen*

even mean—thus the more appropriately reflecting the true case of man in his corruptible body. But this was all for the theologians; worshipping Christians judged otherwise, and they imaged their Christ as lovely and radiant. First of all, he was the Good Shepherd, youthful and unbearded, graceful and gracious, bringing tenderly the lost sheep—a little lamb which itself is the token of the Lamb of God; again, he is the Teacher, also most frequently represented as a beardless youth with curling hair falling to his shoulders, bearing a scroll and giving instruction to his disciples; occasionally he is a babe, a bambino, and sometimes his Mother is shown (but Mary was to wait many a year for the coming, in the arts, of her beatitude); and latterly, in the mosaics, he has become the Christ of the tradition, a prince, splendid with halo as befits the Son of God, throned on the arch of heaven or with hand raised in blessing. In these latter forms he is usually shown as bearded, though the older smooth-faced representation still finds its place. But in all of these visible forms there is intimation of a divine beauty.

*statuette Lateran Museum*

*statuette found at Civita Lavinia, now in the Museo Nazionale, Rome*

*especially Ravenna*

*the beard with the Greeks had been symbol of rhetor, philosopher, Father of the Gods*

It is in the expression that labors through the crudeness of the representations that this beauty appears—like a last ray from the vanishing pathos of Greek art. Only,—and here it differs from the pagan things as here also it begins to be an explanation of the Christian conquest of Rome,—only now the pathos and beauty are derived from something new-forming in the human spirit. There are *no*

*the boy-faced fresco in the Cemetery of Domatilla*

pagan images conveying just this strange fusion of stillness and humility and immolation, and of a purity that is penetrated with understanding, and of a something further which we call love.... a whole complexion of mind which this inadept art with a rude adeptness discovered, so that it is the only expression out of the Roman period that is not hard and stylized, but is living and powerful. Something *had* happened, amid peoples wearied with taskmasters, tormented and torn with bestialities, which had taken the form of a great and wistful seeking after a spiritual life that should be lovely and quieting. The Empire had given men its legion-studded peace, its *pax romana* more vigilant than war and little less cruel, but there was another peace, a "peace of God which passeth understanding" which mankind was discovering, and which was heartening them into indifference for things imperial, for deaths and for arenas. Their name for it was Christ, and it rises, like a resurrection, from the host of obscure graves inscribed with the palm and the *Requiescat in pace!*

*discovered by Arabs in 1910 in the valley of the Orontes; now in New York*

WHETHER the great Chalice of Antioch might indeed invest within its web of carven silver some Cup of the Grail is debate for the learned and the fanciful. But it does show, unimpeachably, in its enthralling image of Jesus, as the blessed preacher, one of the most irrefutable of Christian apologies. Surrounded with the luxuriant

fruitfulness of his vine, the dove of the Spirit hovering above, while below are seated Peter and Paul with the eagle of John between them, the Christ is represented youthful and beardless, with a head almost bulbously enlarged in the cranium, while in the countenance is an expression at once commanding and ineffably sweet and gracious.... One cannot describe it; words bring only incredulity; but the seeing is with an ever-renewed surprise.... Can it be a *portrait*—for certainly it is the likeness of some man? It could explain well enough the discussions of the second-century Fathers if at that time this were still the tradition as to the Saviour's face, for the features have none of the form or regularity of the classic canons, nor are they Jewish, nor distinctly of any race. But that they are a Christ none can doubt.... Later days and a less Asiatic art were to give to Europe a Greek or Nordic prince to be their image of the Christian hero; yet even in the mosaics and with the Byzantines his is a majesty lighted with sweetness.

*Christian empire*

ANTIQUITY closes with the Christian religion made imperial. It bequeaths to the future in the two great traditions of letters and of art its apotheoses of the man who is made god. That future was to carry each of these expressions into unforeseen expansions, but central in the seal of time the image of Christ had become indelible.

# V



CHRISTIANITY is not a thing handed down once for all, a testament or yet a pair of testaments, like an hereditament to be passed on inviolate. Rather, it is a genuine religion, vital and growing with the tempers and experiences of the men and the ages which have shaped it, and as the centuries have passed it has undergone a series of transcriptions each of which has contributed new meanings to its sum and substance. The personal gospel of Jesus, the evangelism of the Apostles creating a first Christology, its Grecian subtilising through the minds of the Patrists, ecclesiastical establishments under Popes and Patriarchs in the Roman and Byzantine worlds,—all these are modes of the one faith, each bringing to the religion its addition of meaning, to be assumed like an augmented patrimony by the Christian centuries that were to follow. 'Primitivism', the effort to find again just the first flush of the Christian faith, purged of the accretions of time, is falsely vain where this seeks to be a restoration; for time is the never-restoring, nor can any belief long remain vivid and moving which refuses to face and own that history which is its paternity.

*eras and dispensations*

The coming of Christ marks the Christian Era, and is, in fact, a crux in the paths of the world's history; but within the era itself there are changes of dispensation as radical, for the faith, as for mundane life are the transformations of the substance of civilization following the floods and recessions of geographical populations. 'New time, new Christ', is not irreverence; it is assertion of the unspent force of the faith, of the reality of the *life* of Christ.

*Goths and Saracens*

Not merely geographical mountains but a temporal abyss separates Atlantic from Mediterranean Europe, the Ancient from the Mediæval world. Historically, the separation is marked by two great irruptions of peoples, which blotted out what had been, and then slowly refashioned a demesne for mankind. The first of these, out of the north, was a coming of the hordes who wandered beyond the Roman walls, far-flung tribes of the Goths and their kin. They struck east and west, at the gates of Byzantium and at the gates of Rome, and from the ash of their furies arose the forms of new kingdoms. Thenceforth, for Europeans, the scene of life was shifted to lands Transalpine. The second irruption, out of the Orient, came with a splendor of cimetars, horsemen of another apocalypse, and by it Europe was walled and narrowed into its own peninsular being. The Mediterranean world had known the Old East with familiarity, and it was not unaware of the Indies and a remoter China; but with the

coming of Islam the eastward ways were destroyed and the East itself became a legend.

*Christendom and Heathenesse*

Thus, when the Middle Age came, the West knew but two mankinds, and men named these Christendom and Heathenesse; at the head of one the blazonry of Christ, above the other the crescents of Mahound. In its ethical simplicity the scheme finds its best analogue in the legendary conflicts and outlooks of the Homeric Greeks, harking back to "the old war of Europe and Asia" celebrated by Herodotus; and perhaps truly it was an outcome of this hoary contest, for the beginnings of which we must look far into predynastic time. In a brief and lurid evening Antiquity vanished and The Darkness fell. Five centuries were consumed in the shapings of the new kingdoms at the hand of the Nordic barbarians and in the shuttering of horizons by the upreared barriers of Islam, and this is the period which we call the Night of Europe. Then, for another five centuries, the Christian world was to remain geographically isolated, with its active center toward the Atlantic, and this is our Mediæval Age, and a second great incarnation of the Faith. Thus Christendom became a terrestrial fact, local and bounded, and a new and compact group of meanings were lived into Christianity. No age of Occidental history can quite vie with the Middle period for self-consistency and inner completeness —which may in part account for the singular remoteness with which a brief time has invested it,

as being of itself too subsistent for diffusion. Nevertheless, we are its heirs, more than we guess, socially and spiritually. On its religious side, in a very special sense this age is *The Church.*

**Children of the North**

HOW the Nordic peoples so readily became Christian is difficult to understand; certainly our fragmentary records of their conversions hardly make it intelligible. Some have assigned borderland propinquity and acculturation in the later Roman period as a heavy reason, the gradual Latinization of Germanic tribes on the Roman frontiers. This, no doubt, helps to explain why the lapse of Mediterranean culture was a decline and a crumbling rather than an instant shattering; but it does not diminish the fact that for long centuries any genuine fusion of the North and the South was to be impossible. In the course of the ninth and tenth centuries *all* the cities of the heart of France were
*A.D.* 885 destroyed: Paris "once resplendent in glory and riches, celebrated for the fertility of its territories, is become but a mound of ashes!" The villages were razed from the countryside; the forests resumed their dominion over the fields, forming a fugitive shelter for the broken populations or yielding heavy timbers for the fossed and palisaded strong houses erected at river fork and on hill escarpment; the churches, roof-fallen, became lairs for wolves and nesting-places for hawks and owls; urban life, last symbol of the relinquished dominion

of the South, vanished utterly; and over the central stretches of Transalpine Europe Nature reasserted her virginity. Nowadays we are accustomed to speak much of the exchange of solid materialities, of that barter of chattels which commerce still is, as being the foundation of any *real* influence, culture upon culture, and as opening the gates to the transmission of ideal elements. But this is only an accident of our own commercial habits; it has but the meagrest historical support; and just here, in the fact that even among the domiciled Germanic tribes, within short shrift all that remained of Romanic culture was the Christian religion, it is outstandingly belied; it was the ideal that lived, the arts died. It is as if the Classical civilization were only a pagan husk from which the imprisoned spirit had flown, released and metamorphosed.

*ideas are a light freight, physically; but cf., spread of Buddhism; even of merchandise what carries most thought is least in bulk*

But this is no explanation of the conversion; it is only reminiscence of the fact. And it seems odd, granted that the something which Rome was to transmit was indeed to be ideal and not material, a religion and not a commerce, that this religion might not have been another than the Christian. The Mithraic cult was flourishing among Gallo-Roman and Germano-Roman legionaries, with fanes advanced beyond Christian boundaries, to the Roman outposts; and the mysteries of Mithras, long proved of the militant in soul, ought surely (we should say) to have been just what the berserks of Valhalla should have sought,—were they at all concerned to exchange their own glories for another. But it was

*why not Mithraism?*

not so; Mithraism faded with the legions; the Goths became Christians.

Another supposition is this: that the Germanic folk had been vaguely Christianized even before the conversions. Thus, Norse mythology, it is suggested, shows in Baldur a northern Christ, in Loki another Satan, and in the Ragnarok a Christian eschatology. The Christian motivation, too, is not remote: the battle of good and ill, the vicarious sacrifice, the redemption of the world through terror and cataclysm, a Paradise shining above the plains of things temporal. Then, again, in the hero-tales there is ever-recurring some deed of self-immolation, a man, half-divine, warring to free his fellow-men from the plagues of the fiend,—a Beówulf against Grendel, a Sigurd destroying Fafnir; and about these heroes, moody and fated and disdainful of death, there is always the band of the faithful—with always one black traitor,—ineffectual to preserve him in the last mortal struggle, seeming to be more like a voice than like actors, a Greek chorus ringing with the echoes of Destiny, a Horatio remembering Hamlet. When in the Northern heart Christ and his disciples were adopted, they were first and most vividly seen as such a band.

*but as well, save for propinquity, one might argue an Aztec or a Buddhist influence. Myths of cataclysm are as universal as is sense of peril; and all nations have discovered their Christs*

Nevertheless, there is a vast difference between this Germanic imagination of humanity and its Christian embodiment. Love is understood as a kind of loyalty, a devotion of followers to leader even in the face of inevitable doom which man must share

*love and courage as the North knew them*

with master; there is no deliverance; the Northern gods themselves are to die! Courage, also, is other than the fortitude, the love-inspired power to bear all things, of the great Apostle; it is an aggressive and belligerent, yet at the same time hopeless courage; the courage of the man who undergoes the ordeal just to show that his is the stuff that can undergo it, even knowing it fateful. And the gods share this, too: the archangels of the Teutonic Father of the Gods are Valkyrs, war-women; but these also have their dooms which he is powerless to evade.... Possibly the Christian God-Father, in his sacrifice of the divine Son, would be more appealingly godlike were his act, like another Wotan's immolation of the best-loved Valkyrie, under the impulsion of evadeless Necessity. Hellenes and Nordics are alike in this, that they know what it is to be men, open-eyed before doom. Their trinities are Fates and Norns.

*mortal gods*

Actually, so far as the literary evidence shows, rather than deriving from it, the Nordic peoples imparted the complexion of their thought to the faith which they adopted; and in place of some nebulous pre-Christian fusion with Christianity, coloring their beliefs, theirs it was to make a distinctive contribution to the religion. In Teutonic society the telling unit was the oath-bonded war-band, earl and thanes, owing all its duty to the chosen chieftain; the very steading of a man's life was his allegiance, hand and heart, to his willed

*the comitatus*

lord; and the understood fulfillment of living was to participate gloriously in that proof of valor whose one end was to lie at the last somewhere with the battle-slain,—plunder and ravage meantime, to be sure, but the hoarse ravens at the finish. It was men with such a dream of mortality who felled Rome.... And when in turn from Roman lands came the one living gift, they received it with their own minds. In Cædmon's *Genesis* the Hebrew Patriarchs are Teutonic war-chiefs,—Abraham against the Five Kings:

*Cædmon*

> that Holy Man his Hearth-retainers
> bade to their weapons, warriors he wakened,
> hounds of the ashen spear, three in their hundreds,
> leal to their Lord, linden-shields yellow
> bore into battle...

*Cynewulf* And Cynewulf's *Christ;* in the hour of His Ascension, "the Majestic Lord summoned his band of thanes," he "Lord of Splendor, Helm of Bliss," to reveal his will and—as another Beówulf to another Wiglaf—to utter to them his parting words; whereafter they betake themselves back to Jerusalem, "valiant men, sad in mood," grieving for their Gift-Dispenser. No image of the Christian religion appealed with a more simple and direct eloquence to the Nordic mind than this of the faithful band, the Master and his leal Disciples. It was to live on in Mediæval literature in tales of Arthur and his Knights, of Charlemagne and his Paladins,—just as in the tales of Grail-quests and Pilgrim wanderings

were to continue in Christian forms the wraiths of the heedful impulsions which drove the rovers forth, to seek what lay beyond the swart mists of their own coasts and seas.

HISTORICAL and legendary accounts of the conversion of the northern nations supply some clews as to how the shift of religions was made possible. The famous colloquy in the hall of Edwin of Northumbria, remembered by Bede, gives one picture. King and thanes are in council with the Kentish missionary, and it is a pondered, not an impulsive saying of the old earl: "So seems the life of man, O king, as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in winter-tide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tell us aught certainly of these, let us follow it." Another counsellor says, in effect, Let us have Gods that can help us! And king and witenagemot agreeing, the conversion is effected, as it were of an evening. Whether this be picture or fact, the story speaks vividly two historical truths. First, the paganism of the North, no less than that

*A.D. 627*

*Green, 'Short History of the English People,' I, iii.*

of the Classical South, had become but a husk; from whatever of time's sources it may have sprung, there was on North Sea no less than on Mediterranean coasts a spiritual hungering after a securer truth and cleanlier gods, so that men were eager that their lives might be translated into better understandings. Second, and unlike its Mediterranean spread, Christianity was first adopted by kings and nobles and accepted by the war-band who shared the leader's hearth and personal perils, and then it was imposed upon the peasants, to assume as they might. It was adopted in council, as of Edwin's witan; it was carried by the marriage of Christian princesses to pagan kings, for in the Germanic world women had for long been held the wiser in spiritual things; it was assumed for political reasons or as a war-maker's pretext, echoing Constantine; it was bestowed as a penalty of defeat —Charlemagne, his spearmen and his axemen rounding them up, baptizing his thousands of captive Saxons, as should a Christian king! With the very forming of the nations the new religion entered as integral. Into the Imperial edifice of Rome it had come surreptitiously, and it had worked, like termites in the beams of a house, until only the formal shell remained to give the illusion of a pagan majesty,—in the breath of a day swept into the past by Roman legionaries fighting under a standard of the Cross, *In hoc signo!* But into the Mediæval world Christianity came under very different auspices. Old worlds had been laid flat; the provinces

*wise virgins, rune maidens, spae wives, witches*

*Diocletian's persecution, A.D. 303; Constantine's victory, A.D. 312*

were razed for fresh foundations; the Church was destined to become great among builders.

FEUDALISM was a political structure built upon concretely personal loyalties; it had in it little of the abstraction of the Law, even less of a sense for territorial integrities; the cult of the Autochthone, so deep in Greek and Roman feeling, was mainly meaningless for men who had seized the lands by which they lived, lands which gave them prestige of title rather than birth-endowment. In their world the genuine bond was of man to man, not for any abstraction's sake, but for a man's oath's sake, his comradeship, his fealty, for clan-tie or family-tie, or indeed for personal love; the whole social support was human, and might readily become humane. Jesus had sought to impart something analogous, and had made for the first article of his testament a faith in one's fellows. The Middle Ages could understand this as the Classical World might never understand it; and to this extent these Ages were Christian even with their birth.

*patriotism was unguessed; pride of land was pride of station*

The structure of feudal society differed as radically from those of the Classical World and of the Older Orient as did its architecture from the monuments of these more ancient lands. Classic building had been open and public and civic—free colonnades, plazas and porticoes, open-air altars, circuses, baths, aqueducts,—invitation to *all* the people, as was befitting cities that were states, and empires that were,

*architecture and the social order*

after all, a citizenry. Oriental edifices were heavy and tyrannous, weighting the earth with their platforms and pylons, their commemorative monoliths and their brass-gated walls; the pyramid, whether as temple or as tomb, was their significant form, and like a pyramid was their pharaoh-topped societies, all designed to grind what lay below into an indiscriminate soil. In its fashion feudal society also was pyramidal, but the feudal pyramid was not one of a ponderous mass melling into the earth from its insupportable weight; rather it was a pyramid of spaces, with arches upspringing and upsupporting, tier above tier, until at the summit the spires shine like ensigns. It is no cairn for the dead, but a house, this feudal organization, and the true image of its structure is found in its own cathedrals.

*the Christian family*

In the earlier period it was the war-band, earl and thanes, that gave the unit; but later comings included carl and carlwife, and the *family* emerges as the real folk-former. More than we think we are justified in speaking of the European domestic group as the 'Christian family', for it was just with the reconstructions that follow the Nordic conquests that the family becomes socially central; whatever in the familial development may have been but accident or the time's necessity, none the less it is fact that the growth of new family ideals and the adoption of Christianity were contemporaneous,—and here again was a contribution which, out of its

own life, the North was making to the religion. In the desolated years which marked the recessions of Roman power, everywhere, where men held together at all, they held as family unities—sire and sons with their wives and their dependents, so that a man's chance of life was often enough but just his family strength. The lien was closer than that even of the sworn band, although at first, and for long, many a tale was sung of the hard conflicts that beset men torn in two directions, by love of kin and by duty to lord. Roman parallels show the *patria* as the rival of paternal love; with Rüdiger or with Duke Aymon it is the suzerain whose claim is higher than the blood-tie: "God will deny him who betrays his lord!"

*blood-tie and vassal-duty*

It is, of course, the aristocratic and landed family that forms the feudal unit. Its substructure was the households of the peasants, the serfs of the soil, and of the attached men gathered at the gates of the lord's castle; while the castle-dwellers themselves, lord and lady, heir and cadets and dowered daughters, added the edifice, which gained in dignity not only lineally as through the years it assembled tradition, but also laterally through its branchings and alliances, its fealties and its suzerainties. Ultimately nearly the whole of society was caught into the complication: the sovereign at the apex, in his own right a feudal baron; next, his great lords, princely and ducal vassals, each subtended by his

own baronial vassalage, and they in turn by vavassors and dependents—with the blunt level of commonfolk everywhere attached, each owning a lord, each some man's man. The system was built up of dependencies, but they were by no means operative in only a single direction; support was balanced by responsibility, service here, protection there, and help for the other from both chief and retainer; the lords were like the keys of arches, summits of construction but also quoins of retention. As in all human societies where men, after their kind, achieve positions of power, there were abuses and brutalities and wanton cruelty and hard greed and hurt without redress done to the weaker. But this was no part of the *idea* built into the house, which made generosity and charity, honor and highmindedness the virtues of the aristocrat, and from the commoner man asked not only loyalty of the hand but also that of the heart. And for five fruitful centuries this system held unchallenged sway; men were content with their devotion; they found their lives well-rounded and full, asking no more than their feudal rights; and it was only well toward the close of the epoch that some Peter the Ploughman might quirk his thumb and ask, "When Adam delved and Eva span, who was then the gentleman?"

*but Langland's Peter is in the end Christ*

After all, duty, loyalty, piety, in their day may appeal as strongly to the dignity of men as in another time liberty, equality, fraternity, may stir their en-

thusiasms. To the Feudal Age nothing was more intelligible than God's sovereignty, and why indeed should not men pattern their earth after the hierarchies of heaven? The image taught contentment, each man glad where God had placed him; and if any failed, high or low, well, every villein and churl had seen, done in stone over the church door, lord temporal and lord bishop along with sinful commoner being herded into hell by jubilant devils. In the Day of Reckoning judgement was to be impartial and none should find exemption from blood-wite.

**The Church Temporal**

THE ROMAN CHURCH conquered Rome's destroyers as Greek culture had wrested the victor's iron from Roman hands and had made of the Latin world an Hellenic province. Legions vanished; walls were broken; emperors were lifted into myths; but something remained living where Rome had been, and it was a something which first awed and then subdued the barbarians. Already in the hour of Attila there had gathered to the Bishop of *A.D. 452* Rome a glamour of spiritual greatness that could hush tumults and abash terrors; a persuasion which was not of arms had entered the world when Leo I turned back the Hun from the See of Peter. Dates are only vaguely certificative of history, but if a year may cleave old and new in time's worlds that year is 529 A.D. Five years before, Boethius, the

*translated into English by King Alfred and by Chaucer; in the history of thought are none more tragic figures than Boethius, helplessly keen to stay the ruin of Classical culture, Roger Bacon committing to cipher a science for which his world was unready. They begin and end the Middle Age of mind*

last man to think with the antique mind, had been put to death in the prison where he had composed his Consolations of Philosophy, which was to become the final legacy of ancient thought on into the Great Dusk: he himself was well aware of the vastness of the destruction that lay about him, and he strove to keep, as best he might, one little lamp trimmed and burning; his contemporaries, even in their unseeing, felt vaguely the greatness of his soul, and they sainted him; his was the elder Rome's death. In 529 Justinian closed the Academy in Athens and exiled the last teachers of Grecian learning. In the same year, in Italy, the rule of St. Benedict was inaugurated. The Classic world had closed its schools; the Mediæval had opened its monasteries. It was the monasteries which were to be the battle-camps of the Church, shielding something of learning, salving where they could, receiving refugees, sending forth missionaries.

*Paris, like Rome has its Christian catacombs*

The Roman provinces had been Christianized before the irruptions from the North; but it was with a variegated and unorganized Christianity, Greek in the East, Latin in the Latinized lands, Celtic in the British and Irish West; and its heresies, like its orthodoxies, were without barrier, so that one of the factors which made reorganization slow in the Latin world was the very fact that its conquerors were Arian rather than Roman in their faith. Differences of belief varied from such matters as style of tonsure to the substance of the Trinity, alike unim-

*Goths, Burgundians, Lombards*

portant except in so far as they affected the united front which Christianity could offer—singleness was the all-important. The rule of Benedict perhaps more than any other force created this and gave to Latin Christianity its pre-eminence. For the Benedictine monastery was no loose aggregation of eremites, clustered about some ascetic of fame, as was the Greek or the Celtic religious community; rather it was an enterprise, definitely constructive. Those who entered its walls became members of a building community, erecting their own houses, cultivating their own fields, following the crafts, maintaining the arts, teaching what remained to be taught from the older civilization. The monastery was like a *family,* a Family of God; and in its work and office it precisely resembled the great feudal families that were coming into being wherever men's lives needed the helm of protection and assurance of the right to labor.

*the monastic family*

Thus, through all the champagnes of central Europe, and in the hills and on the isles, there grew up a network of religious establishments—abbeys paced as systematically as the familial châteaux, so that the slender spire of the church, rising above the close, everywhere vied with the harsh tower of the castle donjon to make the landscape picturesque. Gothic architecture created but two essential forms, castle and church; the one heavy and frowning, with its mantlings and crenellations, its moats and its battlements; the other strangely light and aspiring,

*the visible Church*

luminous even in its glooms. One was the image of the feudal fief, the other of God's benefice; and they sprang together as with a chemic cohesion, forming a single and whole emblem of man's labors and of his nature, both body and spirit.

The Church Temporal was a visible and present reality for the Mediæval man in a sense which it is difficult for us quite to restore. Nature had not formed the sexes more complementally, to organize their hearthside families, than had God designed earth and heaven for visible union in the religious house and household. In part this came from an inheritance yet older than the monastic. The earlier *bishoprics* Christianity had been organized into bishoprics, essentially urban; and wherever the towns survived, there the bishop remained strong, champion of the people. The early Germanic Emperors made of the bishops of northern Italy (before the day of Guelf and Ghibeline) their personal vicars, to hold the nobles in check; and something of this character was maintained in the Transalpine world, where the bishop was ever spiritually near to his people, Father to his Christian Family, Shepherd of Souls. It is true that the episcopal office tended to become a prerogative of the noble-born, and the episcopal diocese itself, divided into its parishes like subholdings in a fief, took on the figure of a great barony whose lord's castle was the majestic cathedral mansion; and in a yet greater organization, communicant and priest, bishop and archbishop, cardinal and

pope, the feudal hierarchy is again paired by the ecclesiastical. Nevertheless, at the core was the simple image of the Good Bishop with hand raised in the episcopal blessing over all *his* people. This, at least, was men's dream of their reality,—and it is the dream that exacts fealty.

**The Church Spiritual**

THE HOLY FAMILY appears in art only with the Middle Age. Indeed the real trinitarianism of Mediæval Christianity was that of the Father, the Son, and the Blessed Mother; the doctors might know another Trinity and cause it to be symbolled, but for unlettered folk, whose books were pictures, Joseph and Jesus and Mary were the haloed three who were likewise a one. No religion has ever been more intimately humanized, no divine beings ever brought closer to the heart of man. In the arts—carving, painting, glass, fine illumination,—Jesus is shown in every precious moment of his career, and always, like the dear scion of some noble house, with watchful father, solicitous mother, or stout apostolic servants worshipful and near. Now he is a young man proud with his retainers; now a hero death-ready or triumphing; again, and most of all, a babe who is also a royal heir. And Mary .... from the ecstasy of glad young motherhood in the thrillingly splendid Golden Virgin of Amiens on to the unquenchable tears of the *Stabat Mater*.... there is not in all the world such another exaltation

*loveliest in the arms of the Virgin of the Mathuret at Riom,*

of the glory of mothers! Of the Gospel writers Luke alone seemed to remember Mary, but the Middle Ages gave to her more than compensation.

*the Virgin of the Cathedral of Anvers, or she of Sainte Chapelle, with the apple,— and the tradition still lives, as witness Lee Lawrie's heavenly Virgin for St. Mary's Notre Dame, Ind.*

It was unthinkable, too, in these times that the Holy Family should be less than royal. Over the church doors Joseph is deposed, replaced by the Majesty of God, and above the altar, also, the divine grace descends from Heaven's Sovereign in the form of the Dove which is his blazon; but the height of feudal devotion goes to the young Prince, God's eternal heir, and to the blissful Queen who brought Paradise down to Earth with her body's fruit.... Ah, Mary, Queen! There are no gifts like to thine! Inexpressibly thou art nearer than the Venerable Sovereign, with his time-combed beard, Lord of awed Awakenings when the Trumpeters shall sound the Day of His Wrath! Nearer, too, than the Prince, who will then be seated upon the Throne which knows only right hand and left.... for thine is the mother's heart, for joys and for dolors, and thine to give is the largesse of royal mercy!.... In the Louvre is a thirteenth-century ivory of the Coronation of the Virgin. Jesus and Mary are seated on the same bench and they are equal in height. Mary's is the more sovereign grace, her hands piously clasped, but in her whole bearing no expression save that of the dear one receiving her deserved homage. Prince Jesus has just lifted his hand from the coronet which he has placed upon her brow; he sits slenderly, a bit remote, and there

*Coronation of the Virgin*

is an almost amusing shyness in his expression: as of a first début, dear with untaught youth! The garments of both are spangled with the fleur-de-lis. And the apex of the central portal of the Cathedral of Rheims carries for its theme the most glorious of all Coronations.

Heaven, like Earth, is organized into feudal hierarchies, at the core of which is the adored family of the Most Christian King, Monarch of the Universe. This is the Church Spiritual, holding high court there, strowing largesse here. The Temporal Church is God's expressive heraldry in his terrestrial demesne; the ecclesiastical offices are the act of homage of God's vassals.

**Ritual**

CIVILIZATIONS, as they mature, tend to become ritualized. Socially they develop a politeness which for each is its own; politically they clothe their functions of state with ceremonial; in letters and the arts characteristic media are chosen, genres are formed, styles cultivated; and conventionalizations of style also dominate the economic life,—needs for food, clothing, housing, all conforming to accepted patterns. All this is the ritual of the civilization no less than are the vestments with which it adorns its more spiritual faiths. The process is not one of emptying meaning from life, but of discovering an effective language for meanings that are urgent of expression; the ritual of a

*the Fine Arts of the older Chinese culture are Poetry, Painting, and Calligraphy, all intimately interbound; music and drama are beneath refinement*

culture is the height of its eloquence. Back of the politeness is some sense of propriety and some code of honor; back of political forms some ideal of the state; supporting the arts is some canonical beauty, some charm that is more than custom; the economic world always conforms to current convictions of values and goods; and religious ritual falls chattering if it voice no conviction. In the United States today, raw-forming as it is, the spread of conformities is in large part due to the expansiveness of a good nature which is half self-confidence and half a clumsy neighborliness of disposition struggling after some community of art and life: Lions and Rotarians, lodges of all sorts, philanthropies, missionizings, organizations, zeals, radios, all struggle after ritual expression, attained most of all, perhaps, in passion-underlain devotions to the solemnities of golf and whist and collegiate football. Life is still in its playtime on the American continent; when the trial of its powers comes more serious cults will develop, and nobler expressions.

*American rituals*

In a matured civilization its rituals tell most deeply the truth of its particular conquest of humanity. Not its science alone, nor its politics, nor its letters and arts, nor its religion,—but *all* of these, caught in the net of its living thought, express themselves in such a manner as to create for it a world, which innerly is its conscious life, outerly its cults and culture. We permit ourselves too often the repose of that fallacy which would branch history into

linealities of politics, science, letters, art, rather than into expressive coalescences of these,—much as a psychologist, for his convenience sake, fallaciously scalpels the living mind into segregate faculties or symptomatic areas of cerebration. Revelation, in each case, must be of the fulfilled complexity, collateral in all its understandings. So, for the Middle Age, we say that it *was* the Church, for the ritual of the Church epitomizes its entire understanding of life.

*God's heraldry*

THE LATIN CROSS, prone, is the Gothic foundation. A few simple geometrical forms, in all the Continents, have done more to stir men's souls to enthusiasms than have all scriptures and preachings; in crosses alone are many prayers other than Christian, and exaltations of faith, and stigmatisms. The cross is a man; it is a flying eagle; it is a dicotyledon branching from earth; it is the gnomon of this mid-earth itself, and of its four directions; it is the two bones that signify death; and it is Christ's Rood-token. No commensuration of man to his world can be adequate which fails to remember and explain this geometry.

*pagan before Christ; ancient American Indian; prehistoric*

*the church edifice*

The Gothic church is composed in trinities. The cross itself is the body, the extended arms, and the divine head of Christ crucified,—nave, transept, apse, reflecting vaguely the three orders of men for whom he died, commons, and lords, and clergy. But

threefold also is the altitude, with a crypt for the dead, the great floor for living men, and the glories of the clerestory for ministering angels. The tripartite character is carried on into the subdivisions, —the nave with its two aisles (which might themselves be doubled); the apse, composed of choir, sanctuary of the altar, lady chapel; the arcades, lifting in three tiers;—whether from conscious symbolism or from some trinitarian mode of thinking, is of no essential moment. Externally, also. The apse is built, and then the transept, and then the nave; while the west front rises, first from the ground, three-pierced with portals, then massive to the great rose window, and third in the spires, incomplete *here,* perhaps, but *there* perfect! Is it fancy to see Father and Son in the twin frontal spires, and the Holy Spirit in the slender flêche, between and beyond? In the tympanum, over the central door beneath, the delicate dove holds just such a mediating position.

*of French Gothic*

*vision of Paradise*

The edifice is adorned with every jewel. Miracles reflected in miracles of glass; the passions of Christ, the joys and griefs of the Virgin Mother, the Evangelists, Acts of the Apostles, Revelation, Saints, in gold-splendored painting, in polychromed carving, in tapestry, embroidery, gem and vessel; the whole Testament of Christ is transformed into a vision of Paradise. Further, it unites the worlds. The altar is the center of magnificence, for thereat must be shown the Glory of God and the emblem of Redemption—there, the vision of the Mystery,

which is the still moment of the central Faith;—but all about, in aisle and side chapel, on column and choir-screen, there are blazons of families, portraits of men and women, memorials human and pathetic, oratories for prayers too personal for the loftier spaces, shrines of neighborly saints, not remotely preoccupied or earth-forgetting, confessionals, resting-places, yes, and seclusions for hale jest and neighborly gossip. The treasury is a sort of local safety-vault and depository; the crypt may store unused goods as well as unused bodies; alms and beggars are at the door; miracles are staged between the buttresses; and the church faces the plaza where life moves daily—under its shadow. Gallows may be there, too; but mainly these stand beyond the gates. Seen from the countryside, above village and borough the Church stands monumental,—not commemoratively, but monumental of life. . . .

*the crypt*

To descend into the crypt, nothing throws swifter illumination upon an age than do its funeral monuments; in our conception of death is revealed our understanding of life. The marvelous portrait statues which inhabit Egyptian tombs, sedate, satisfied, unimaginatively complete—all part and parcel with the platters of viands, droves of bullocks and asses, housings, dolls, trinkets, gods, which should make a substantial show, there where souls are weighed—for the Egyptian was materially convinced as to his immortality. In contrast, the heart-wounding loveliness of the Farewells of the Greek stelæ! or indeed, the jocundity of Etruscan gentle-

*Egyptian, Greek, and Etruscan funeral monuments*

men and ladies gone to feast lightly with hospitable deities. Over against these lie the brasses and the marbles of the crypt and chapel tombs, knight and lady and prelate, hands clasped, face heavenward, stark in a last piety, but strangely seeing, and not dead.... The plot of Holy Ground, the Campo Santo, some precious stead in the midst of God's benefice, attached to his Church and consecrated, this was the secure sleeping-place of the humble, fenced by Divine Grace. The Egyptians gave peasant bones to the sands and the jackals, or at best to a pit of tar.

*Campo Santo*

*Hell*

Even Hell *lived*. One sometimes wonders if the Middle Ages did not see life at its full only when discarnate. No sinner can be made to suffer in this life (and men understood torture) with an approximation of the agonies seen through the expectant jaws of Damnation,—and at the second death, twice unbodied, there are torments yet more unthinkably excruciating! There is a grim humour in the love of efficient devils indicated in carving (quite in place on the church!) and painted initial, and they seem, somehow, more real than the cloud-treading angels. Then, too, the *danse macabre*—as if the bones had only found the real lightness of active life in being divested of their flesh. The Greek philosophers had made body and soul into a divorceable two; but no ancient had ever put into the body-freed spirit a tithe of the reality which Mediæval imagination conferred upon it. Its spirit world may to us appear

*'Inferno,' VI.* 94-111

*aforetime in the Cimetière des Innocents, Paris, in grand frieze*

material, living phantasm, but it is a world, present and operative, and industriously concerned with mortal doings,—especially, of course, the damned and purgatorial spirits, denied their bliss. Horrors grew out of it; but men were physically wrestling with the fiends of Hell in those days. . . .

*religious music*

CHURCH MUSIC is the most complete and perfect of the expressions of this sense of the division of soul from body; it is the music of disembodiment. This music is Mediæval in the same distinguished sense in which stained glass, plate armor, or heraldic crests are Mediæval; it may have origins, but it has no analogue elsewhere. The great art of music, as the world knows it, is fused of two factors: the melodic gift of the voice and the rhythmic periods of the moving limbs of man. Mainly it is the latter, the rhythms, that give form and style, and distinguish school from school and the musical temperament of one nation from another; mainly music is *danced* rather than sung, even if the dancing may become sublimated and imaginary. The body, limb and trunk, breath and heart-beat, moves with patterned motions and timed turns and stops to create figures gracious or vigorous and to articulate themes into structured patterns; music is essentially athletic, base or clean according to the motion which it emulates. Whatever the voice of man or instrument may add, the shape-givers, the embodiers

of musical understanding, are the percussions,—breath-takings, footings, hand-clappings, wood against wood, boom of the hollow drum, pluckings, twangs, all that marches or leaps or swings. This is the musical incarnation.... But the Church discovered and made for its symbol a musical discarnation. The Plain Chant is conceived as unbodied voice and the polyphonic choir as a purification of tone with overtone past the niceties of physics; the notes swelling in the unisons of the octave voice of man sound the majesties of the heavens; echoing in antiphon they are heaven and earth in sonorous communication; figurate about the high central chant they are like adorations before the throne of God. The music is timeless, too; unbarred, unfenced, knowing only the pauses of its own raptures or reflections; it is like the act of creation when this act was a thought. If there is any motional image that may be drawn for it none is more apt than that of flight, and indeed the *fugue* is the greatest of its embodiments. It is like the motion of birds, mounting, soaring, receding, descending, always bodilessly, always with no whisper of friction; and the song of birds in sunny spaces is the nearest analogy which the natural world affords to its tonal exaltation. That there was the vision of angels in it the very rubrics of the scores tell us, and we ourselves know that it invites the body to an utter quiescence, while the spirit ascends.

*cantus firmus*

When church music finally discovered its instru-

mental timbre this was in the form of a great breath —the organ. The breath, as we know, is from beyond genesis the breath of life; in the communicant world it is the breath of prayer; in the polities, human and cosmic, the breath of freedom; in all it is inspiration! The organ, emblematically, made breathing its own, so powerfully and vastly that it might seem the creational respiration of God himself, forming and sustaining his Universe.... Possibly the theory of music should be rewritten, giving the voice-quality, the timbre, that pre-eminence which actually counts most in the formation of taste. It is a flare for timbres reflecting the mechanic roars and whines and the loosed, petty passions of our barbaric industrial cities that plumps us into an age of saxophones and 'blues'; like the delicacies of old lace the strings of the quartet are preserved only in lavenders.... Chaucer chants of "the Mercy orgon that in the chirche gon,"—God's mercy is a music, organ-sweet and all-enveloping....

*debased in our theatres*

Voice music is verbal music. In the litany whether the words are intoned by the priest, responded by the congregation, or sung by the choir, all are a music from the introit to the benediction. Nothing more beautiful in the perfection of its union of word and tone exists, nothing more exalted in man's expression, than this liturgical utterance, with its *Kyrie* and its *Gloria,* its *Sanctus* and its *Agnus Dei,* rising like peaks of luminosity in the sublime drama of the Mass. The element of noise, in most

*poetry*

*the Mass*

of our music so familiar as to pass unobserved, is here eliminated, and with it vanishes the dross of the material world. Far back in the Dark Ages there begin to emerge the *Sequences* of religious chant and lyric deriving their inspiration from the same genius as that which made radiant the walls and enchanted the windows of the churches, and it created a service within the house as glorified as was the temple itself,—so that the latter can only be seen, even to this day, not as a silent memory, but as a living sanctuary, in those hours when the Mass is being celebrated. The high bequest of this vocal art is the hymn—the Latin hymn (later to be followed in every vulgar tongue), creating a poetry which is one of the noblest contributions to the world's letters. In Classical poetry there is nothing in the Latin, and only sparsely in Greek verse, lyric or ode, that sweeps more splendidly into the spirited skies or enfolds more tenderly life's simplicity than do these ethereal Evangels—"Ave, maris stella," "O Luce qui mortalibus," "Jesu, redemptor sæculi," the "Dies Iræ," the "Veni, Sancte Spiritus." If one be untouched by these, there is nothing to say save that for him the spheres are obliterate; the phrases tread magnificence; they linger, like the sheltering wing of archangels, more majestic than vision, more tender than caress. . . .

*tourist seeing is often not even memory*

It is true that the body returns incorporate in the Processionals and Recessionals. These are the progress-songs of God's pilgrims, and the marching-

*mortal men are journeymen*

chants of his Crusaders, for here man is but a wayfarer with *the* Wayfarer, and the moving choir but the mortal figure of the heavenly hosts. The Middle Ages are to be understood only when we remember that man is from birth to death a Viator, and life itself a Pilgrimage. Negro spirituals, with their body-swayings and their physical emotion, their moanings and amens, are remote by centuries from the music of the Mediæval Church,—bearing in relation to it much what the tomb-statue of the priest Katep bears to the mitred marble of the tomb of the Bishop of Worcester or to the half-deprecatory piety of the effigy of Blanche of Champaigne.... In all art, plastic or pictorial, there is no such rendering of Victorious Faith as in the lovely Resurrection of the Virgin in the relief of the Cathedral of Senlis: the tomb is shattered by the music of Paradise, winged and eager....

*IVth Dynasty*

*in the Louvre*

OTHER RELIGIONS besides Christianity organize their ritual after some image of man's life, making of it a kind of viaticum for his wayfaring needs; but none other religion achieves this end so beautifully. Man's active day is bound into the shieldings of the morning and the evening prayers, the morning salutation with its *Pater noster* and *Ave Maria,* the evening orison embracing adoration and thanks, plea for grace and acknowledgment of fault. The calendar of the year is illuminated with

*the liturgy*

the constellations of the saints, sanctifying the days which remember them and giving festal fortunes for their name's sake. Day and year give ecclesiastical time, wrought into the astronomical. But there is also another time-form, that of the progress of life itself, and this likewise is represented in two symbols.

*the ritual drama*

First, the life of Christ is epitomized in the liturgical drama that opens with the *Adeste fideles* and *Gloria in excelsis* of the joyful Advent, moves on to the *De profundis* of Ash Wednesday, with its solemnly penitential psalms, to pass exultant to the *Alleluia* of Easter and the *Regna terræ cantate Deo* of the Feast of the Ascension. Just as in gold-illumined painting, in carven wood and stone, in jewelled and patterned glass, Christ's life and passion is wrought into the multiform adornment of the visible and spatial temple; so here, in the ritual heart of the liturgical year, it is given its dramatic and temporal image,—the more moving of the two in that the action is always that for which the setting is created. Christmas to Easter has become almost uniquely *the* season of Christian festival, because of this symbolism. It is true enough that both Christmas and Easter, as also All-Hallows, the Festival of the Souls, are remotely pre-Christian as annual festivals; but in a profound sense they were Christian before the religion came, for their age-old symbolism was still, in the North, that of the birth of the year with the solstitial beginning of the return-

journey of the sun; while of Easter, too, the pagan meaning was that of a resurrection coming in the flowers and delight of spring; the very name of the goddess, *Eostre,* is cognate with *Eos* and *east,* a native symbol for the Light which springs from the Orient. Thus, as had Greece and Rome, the North gave its addition to the ritual hereditament of the Christian faith.

*ex oriente lux*

In a second, less ocular and more deeply adoptive sense, man's life is made emblematic in the Sacraments. The Roman Church recognizes seven of these as of primary significance, and of the seven four are essentially demarcations of the path of a man's years; they are, Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Extreme Unction. These rites conform to birth, adolescence, parenthood, and death, as Nature marks them, giving cyclical completion to the epiphany which a lifetime is; but in the religion, they mark these transitions of form as more than biologically metamorphic, as themselves sacramental of divinely ordered revelation,—less outgrowths, one moment from another, than emergences from one understanding into another. There are moral and spiritual enthrallments, invested with every force of our imaginative, intellectual and emotional understanding, assuming form and vividness with each of these great moments physiological,—nay, it *is* the moral and the spiritual, vastly more than the bodily discoveries, that make them momentous for man's humanity: all the tenderness that turns to little

*the sacraments*

*Buddhists and Brahmans, Greeks and American Indians, —all men make similar ritual divisions of a human life; for its form is one, and universal*

babes; the flushes and lilts and gaieties, bashful or jaunty, of sudden youth; the romances and even more the soil-delving social subsistencies of men and women joined in marriage; lastly, the heroisms and calms and farewells of the departures, and the excruciations, too, which men must face and share .... whatever else may be there, at least love underlies them, for joy or for pain, love is the gift and the dear price. Not every mortal is to know them all: the Feast of the Sainted Innocents is the most pathetic and the most anguished in significance of all the Christian festivals,—"the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne is their Shepherd, and will lead them to the fount of living water, and God will wipe all tears from their eyes!" There is no prayer like it! No faith more trembling with love and grief unappeased!.... About such matters, there is no arguing. They *are* the sacraments.

*Orders* Of the three remaining primary Sacraments that of Orders, marking entrance into the religious life, might be regarded as an equivalent or analogue of Marriage, being as it were the acceptance of the Church as spouse,—this at least in the celibate communions. Penance, also, is parcel of the definition of living; for man's life is an action and a deed, fraught with error and peril: the Christian faith has never been one of quiescence. Devotion, confession, ordeal,—self-understanding and self-proof, these are the Sacrament of Penance, always with the illumination of hope. Purgatory is its greatest

*Penance*

image in Mediæval Catholicism, but its greatest reality is in a life which is devoted to the high crusade of self-conquest. Among moderns, of the book-wise classes, there is much pleasant, and perhaps sincere laudation of the Hellenic ideals of self-knowledge and control,—accompanied by a curious inclination to fail to note that Christianity has stood for this even more aggressively than did the Greeks. For here again, the Sacrament of Penance, when truly understood, is no hour's confessional and modish abstinence; it is a facing of life with a stout heart, a clean understanding, a sacrifice that is past hope of recompense: it is the Vigil.

*the Eucharist*

In the Eastern Church the sacraments are named the Mysteries, and this name deserves to be kept for that which among them all is supreme in significance, the Holy Communion, celebrated alike by East and West, by Catholic and Protestant. The liturgical celebration of the Eucharist, Roman or Anglican, is beautiful even in the spectacular sense; and the central intensity of every religious mystery has perhaps always been its spectacle, its high moment of Vision, when the veil is lifted and the eyes are opened to the revelation—seen symbol of unseen truth. The elevation of the Host and of the Chalice —body and blood of the redemptive sacrifice—is this solemn revelation.... The thing can readily be taken as trivial or worse—baker's bread and fruit-juice! Some of the first Christians, fighting back at the Pagans, could with a similar irony, ridicule

*paraphrasing a Gnostic passage in the 'Philosophoumena', V. iii*

the mystery-vision at Eleusis: "And what was this wonder, this mystic salvation of the goddesses? An ear of reaper's wheat!" Anthropologists, clerical and not, can give another turn: the bread and the wine are a last surrogate: back of them lie harvest carousals, barbecued animals, anthropophagy perhaps. These are the cartoonist and naturalist attitudes, each quite supportable in its own fashions. But who among us does not know? The mystery of commerce is a pocket-piece, a coin; of science a meter-stick; of patriotism a yard of cloth striped and spangled. The visible world also is a mystery, with life for its reading.... The last reality of the Eucharist, like the last reality of every physical thing, is as a communion, which in this case is of whatever is godlike in man with whatever is divine in the world, a mingling and participation of essential Humanity with essential Divinity. It is thrilling and enthralling, shudder and exaltation combining, to recognize therein the imperious sacrifice, Christ crucified, Man crucified to the World—a gash of light amid the tempests of being!.... For the Christian world there has been one other precious possession in this rite: it is the fealty, the Act of Homage, of the soul to the Pattern Man.

The fulfilled and final word of Christian ritual is the Requiem Mass: *Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.* It is the great response to the *Fiat lux* of Genesis.

THEOLOGIANS have made discrimination of the Church as temporal and spiritual, visible and invisible, militant and triumphant. The temporal, visible and militant Church defines the time, place and action of the Christian drama in this world; the spiritual, invisible and triumphant manifestation of the Ecclesia of God is of the world supernal. If the architect's edifice may be taken as symbol of the visible Church, the sacramental ritual as emblematic of its temporalities, so may the Christian Life be regarded as the essence of the Church Militant.

**The Church Militant**

In the Middle Age a man was a Christian as a matter of birth and domicile; in action he might be a good Christian or a bad, but once born into Christendom he was bound to it by ties as fixing as those which decreed for him serfdom or station among the noblesse; he was Christ's vassal, from his Lord he held his life in fief and to him he gave homage and swore fealty; the blackest of treasons was that of the apostate, for whom was reserved the deepest pit of Hell. But each true vassal, he who was honestly Christ's man, for him it was to be ever-ready, equipped for battle as his liege should summon, and to the end faithful in his performance of his life's devoir. Like the feudal society, the religion was militant.

Collectively, the Church was a host, the Lord's

nation, all Christians organized into the fighting-bodies of his retainers. These included not only the Holy Orders, clerical, monastic and preaching, but also God's crusading chivalry, Hospitalers, Templars, Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, the Teutonic Knights,—and indeed, the whole order of European chivalry was invested with a devoted character; while beyond its confines were the ranks of Christ's men-at-arms, birth-enlisted, each in his own parish, and bound to all the host through the arching structures of deanery and deaconry, diocese and see. The organization was noble, Christendom's front against the infidel!

*Christian chivalry*

WAR is certainly not contemplated in the gospel of Jesus; "Peace on earth, good will to men," is resonantly its keynote. Further, this gospel came in a moment of time when men might *think* peace; for the centuries of Imperial Rome represent the longest period in history during which a great many-nationed region has followed its course without disruptive conflicts; Rome rose and it crumbled in battle-bespattered worlds, but during the period of its supremacy it held its provinces in a virtual peace, even if its empire did most resemble a vast military camp, bordered with foray. Within the Empire Christians generally abjured arms, and it is only with Constantine that armies are found marching under Christ's monogram. A thousand

years later a Christian chivalry was organic in the body of the Church.

*Christian and Infidel*

The sweeps of history indicate how the transformation was wrought; and war, undreamed by Jesus, made an enterprise in his name. Even among the Northerners, axemen and seaxmen, the earlier conquests of the religion were apart from arms, a labor of missionaries. But kings are accustomed to the use of force, and it was kings who were the converts, and for whom the faith readily became a weapon in a double sense. And when Europe had become centrally Christianized war became compelling in a new sense. Attila's was only the first of a series of wind-swift hordes, on to the Golden Tartars and Osmanli Turks, pressing in to take plunder and seizin of steppe-land and valley-land, and to raise hugely on the eastern horizons the tempestuous spectre that was Asia; the dimensions of Europe were narrowed and its capitals became as beseiged fortresses. These were the Scourge of God from the Asiatic East, but from the south came another not less threatening, the sirocco of the Arabian and African deserts, and the battle-cry of the Prophet. To the valleys of France itself the terror of Asia penetrated, east and south, and Châlons-sur-Marne, 451 A.D., and Tours, 732 A.D., rightly mark battles which decisively saved Christendom,—though it was to be inwalled by khanate and caliphate for the centuries which mark an age of its history.

*the Crusades*

In such a setting Christianity became perforce militant. The blessings of the Church rested upon

its fighting-men; its emperors were anointed by popes; the cross was emblazoned on its penons; and images of mail-clad saints found their places in niche and shrine. In the fullness of time and zeal the Crusades came as Europe's answer to Asia and Christendom's challenge to the Infidel. Minds of a certain bent must see in the Frankish expeditions toward the Holy Land no more than an economic urgency cleverly guided by political fooleries; but this is mainly arguing from consequence to impulse. The mad Children's Crusade; the tatterdemalion wastage of the lives of common folk, unguided, dying by the wayside in the Third Crusade; the crossed feet of the tomb effigies; such a jewelled mir-

*Sainte Chapelle*

acle as la Sainte Chapelle of St. Louis the King (for though economic appetites may open markets, they do not dream caskets of the Holy Grail!),— these are response to all such blinded understandings; merchants and ministers of finance may discuss markets and contrive exchange, but the world moves with its enthusiasms, and above each of them glows some banner, some fluttering emblem of an ideal.... Thoughts make men of us, and engloried thoughts create heroes....

*knighthood*

WITHIN the Christian boundaries war became a gentleman's profession. The center of the Mediæval army was its mounted chivalry; bowmen, men-at-arms, infantry of all sorts were for long

virtually auxiliaries,—skirmishers and attendants for the knights, who bore the brunt. The causes of combat were as many as might be the feudal loyalties or the raucous passions of men; but back of them all, form-giving, lay one greater cause—the belief that the physical battle could *prove* the man and that knighthood was in an intrinsic sense an ennoblement. War is a thing of brutalities, but it is also the scene of daring and devotion, and its forms come to achieve their sanctions and rituals no less than do those of any other human enterprise. No age has more consciously sought to consecrate the soldier and his career than did the Middle Age, making of every knight's duty a Christian devotion.

*Norman cavalry victors at Hastings, 1066; English foot at Crécy, 1346*

Indeed, the Church made of the chivalric investiture a virtual sacrament, added to the seven. The night preceding his ceremonial reception into the Order of Chivalry the candidate for knighthood kept fast and vigil at the chapel altar; and before he was conducted into the castle hall, or yet the church, where the final service should occur, he must make confession and receive communion: every knight must be a Christian Champion. Thereafter, in the presence of his suzerain lord, or whatever member of the Chivalry was to invest him with its symbols, the novice was sworn, first, that he would live conformably to the good of the Church and his own salvation, and second, that he would be true to the laws of Chivalry. After this he was clad in his armor, hauberk and greave, helm and gauntlet, and

*the vigil*

*sacrament*

*symbols*

the golden spurs were attached. The dubbing was the stroke of the flat of the sword which he received from the suzerain himself along with the golden chain of the Order. Immediately it was his part to prove his prowess. He was conducted to the court, and taking buckler and lance he must leap to his horse and with a single running stroke fell the mannikin placed to symbolize those foes, of suzerain and Church alike, against whom he was thenceforth enlisted.

*Sans peur et sans reproche*

It was in the names of God, of St. Michael, and of St. George,—divinity, archangel, and earthly hero,—that knighthood was conferred, recognizing militancy at the heart of the world; and indeed, if we are to at all comprehend how it became possible that the Christian religion should come to sanction what was so antagonistic as is warfare to the creed of its founders, it is essential that we see our world narrowed to its Mediæval outlooks. There Earth is viewed as in essence but a jousting-field, where man proves his soul's mettle, with the high Court of Heaven festal and attentive above the lists; God is the great Suzerain, Lord of Kings and Popes and Emperors; near him are the Prince and the coronate Queen, and about are gathered the hierarchies of Seraphim and Cherubim, martyr-saints and hero-saints, dazzling in their heraldic splendors. "Grant, O Immortal Queen, that I be the most brave! that I love the most fair!" The youth in his spurs could cry it, and his response could be the waft of Queen

Mary's azure scarf, but just above the royal balustrade!.... For us the heavens are remote beyond time, and earth's plane is God-abandoned. Our wars are blood-feuds of men....

Personal courage and hardiness; faith to his lord and to his own word; generosity and that largesse which could take no thought of material goods; protection for the weak, charge for the wronged and the helpless; championship of justice; discipline and courtesy; mercy, gentleness, humility,—these were the code of the honor of the knight, to be kept—where the pattern was pure—without fear and without stain; and with it went one other command, echoing and summing all men's last understanding, "Sachez souffrir"—Know what it is to suffer!.... The *Morte d'Arthur* falls toward the close of the period; but the oath with which the King formed his Table surely records something which had happened in the world since first the fighting-men had formed it: "Then the king stablished all his knights, and gave them that were of lands not rich, he gave them lands, and charged them never to do outrageousity nor murder, and always to flee treason; also, by no means to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asketh mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship of King Arthur for evermore; and always to do ladies, damosels, and gentlewomen succour, upon pain of death. Also, that no man take no battles in a wrongful quarrel, for no

*oath of King Arthur's Knights*

law, nor for no world's goods.... And every year were they sworn at the high Feast of Pentecost."

*blood and the Devil's Mass*

BLOOD? Yes! and rapine, and cruelty, and faith's betrayal! Leprosy stalked the highways in the Middle Ages, and the stadia were marked by fouled gibbets and by bands of maimed men and broken folk from sacked cities. Italy discovered more hellish tortures than even Assyria could devise, and there were slow cookings, shreddings, crushings, debauchings of human bodies; men made themselves as fanciful in their butcheries of one another as were made fanciful their persons in gold-checked accoutrements; and there was a Devil's Mass to be said by those who knew themselves to be devils' men, stinking. One need not stall oneself in the mires of the human record to know that the Middle Age understood and cherished the hideous .... as have *all* the heavy years of the weeping Past, and, God help us! as our own years understand and cherish it!.... For them there was at least this excuse: that they knew their Hell as near and physical, and grappled with it, hand and hair!.... *But* —once and for all—this is not *our* interest nor our admiration, nor can it be in the eye of human wisdom. Living is selecting; knowing is selecting; loving is selecting,—and it is for us who live, and would know the good, and would love it, for us it is to choose! And because the Middle Age understood

and cherished, also, and as we believe in a vastly more enduring sense that which was noble and beautiful, and a flower of life irreplaceable, because of this, we shall keep this flower, enchaliced with all sacred things, and share in its blessed Vigil.... And who would dare forget, even as it plays out into the misty romances of the Grail Quest or the coruscation and flamboyancy and flashing pretense of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, who yet would dismiss Knighthood from our codes! The Golden Field was but a surrogate image for older and bloody tournaments, where men died in their harness; and Sangrael was image—for the Great Surrogate of all mankind. We would have it so.

*Sangrael and the Field of the Cloth of Gold*

AMORS et karites et Dieus est une cose".... Love and Charity and God are but one thing! The Middle Ages could say this: but could any other time so speak? It is not Paul now, with his dread of the flesh: *amor* is first, and it is not remote from its cognates. The love of God was direct and personal; charity was near to alms-giving and largesse; and there were saints who espoused the Christ or sweet Poverty as mortals espouse their loves. Everything in Mediæval imagination takes on a nearness, almost myopic, to the intimacies of human experience; the earthly and the heavenly share in one flesh. Consequently human relations could readily be given an almost sacramental benediction,

*love, and its Courts*

and marriage was made into a holy sacrament. Whatever its failings or excesses, men and women have the Middle Age to thank for one wholly priceless gift, the idealization of their loves for one another. The Courts of Love, the wooing lyrics of troubadours, the silken favors worn by knights, all these are but pretty broideries; but they *are* broideries of an idea, and of an idea which the Age created. There may be adultery in the story of Paolo and Francesca, but it permitted passion to be touched with sublimity and Hell to infold one eternal pathos; there is no doubt a mystic theology in the adoration of Dante for Beatrice, but there is also the *New Life;* and we possess the Letters of Abélard and Héloise. The romances are there, there at the heart of the lives which breathed them because they prized them, and however they may be judged by a dissident civilization, none can deny that they fuse into form an idea which was native to their creative hour.... Nowadays, there are women, and numbers of them, glad in what is to them an emancipation from the chivalric ideal: they want no more mock courtesies, no more flowery or musical vows, no more of the dreamy idylls of lovers' play; and surely they are right enough, where naught but the fantasy is rejected. But could they have won the emancipation without the idealization? Or again (for the idealization was largely the Church's gift) does any modern woman wish to accept St. Paul's ideals of her sex? The Blessed Virgin, her Assump-

*woman's emancipation*

tion, her Coronation,—all these are episodes of the Middle Age of Christian Faith.

*saintliness*

BUT it is not alone, nor even principally, in the career of knight and crusader that the Church Militant finds its embodiment. All Christian lives are of its campaign, and among these loftiest in resolution and most heroic in the contest are the saintly. Not here is it some theological quibble as to the body of the sanctified, nor yet a recognition, with the Church, of the canonized; but the organic definition of Holy Living and the set and persevering effort to make it the substance of actual lives—this is what gives greatness to the Mediæval ideal of saintship.... And again, as we pass, let us note that here we are in the presence of something deep-graved and life-shaping among the instincts that construe our human nature into cosmic reality,—'phenomena', if you like, but phenomena that are as undeniably insistent as are plant distributions or the generation of heat,—phenomena for which let him who may find contentment in his psychopathics.... History has written another answer; and the lives of the saints, and their words, have written it.

*'De Imitatione Christi'*

The great Mediæval missal of saintliness is the *Imitation of Christ,* which has lived on beyond its Age and its denomination, nobler than St. Augustine's *Confession* in that it arises personally above the personal and makes of the spirit of devotion such

a discarnation as Gregorian music makes of melodic sound; the *Imitation* is the hymnal of the soul. It is also a soldier's manual. Essentially the life of the saint is the definite acceptance of the gauge of battle with an evil thing, which is the world and the flesh and the devil. Whatever we may think of the strain put upon healthy truth by this conception, it actuated a type of experience that is wholly and dramatically human, nay, militantly human, for the saint is a fighting man. "Wait for the Lord, behave thyself manfully, and be of good courage; be not faithless, do not leave thy place, but *steadily expose both body and soul for the glory of God!*" There is the battle-blare of Oliphant in these words, which syllable for syllable are fitting for Roland or for any other hero of the marches! And in the same
*III, xxxv* chapter—throughout a warrior's litany—the setting of life which creates the perpetual need of the saint's battle is made as clear as sunlight striking against hostile armies marching from their bivouacs to the morning field: "Thou art *never* secure in this life, but as long as thou livest thou shalt always need spiritual armor. Thou dwellest among enemies, and art assaulted on the right hand and on the left. If therefore thou defend not thyself on every side with the shield of patience, thou canst not be long without a wound. Moreover, if thou fix not thy heart on me with sincere willingness to suffer all things for me, thou wilt not be able to bear the heat of this combat, nor to attain to the palm of the blessed. Thou

oughtest therefore to manfully go through all, and to secure a strong hand against whatsoever withstandeth thee."

The virtues which are to sustain and win the conflict are the chivalric virtues of utter loyalty to God, of courage and patience, "to suffer all things .... to bear the heat of this combat"; and of humility and abnegation based on a true and selfless understanding of self: "Who so knoweth himself is lowly in his own eyes," and again, "He that hath truth and perfect charity, seeketh himself in nothing: but only desireth in all things that the glory of God should be exalted." The extremes of Earth's proud devotions are faced, and alike surrendered. Devotion to the body is one: but "unless thou doest violence to thyself, thou shalt never get the victory over sin". Concern for mind's accomplishment is the other: "Be studious for the mortification of thy sins" .... "all men naturally desire knowledge; but what availeth knowledge without the fear of God? .... Let all doctors hold their peace; let all creatures be silent in thy sight; speak Thou alone to me." The clefs of the staves of Mediæval asceticism are in these utterances,—and each is a commentary on the wisdom of Greeks and Moderns.

*I, ii*

*I, xv*

*I, xxii*

*III, xliii; I, ii*

The positive side, the ascetic's compensation, is also chivalric. It is in the song of a Knight of God, worthy to stand high with Paul's great Corinthian pæan, that Thomas à Kempis celebrates the glory of Christian love as the Church knew it: "Love is a

*I Cor. 13*

*III, v*

great thing, yea, a great and thorough good; by itself it makes every thing that is heavy, light: and it bears evenly all that is uneven. For it carries a burden which is no burden, and makes everything that is bitter, sweet and savory. The noble love of Jesus impels a man to do great things, and stirs him up to be always longing for what is more perfect." And then the ecstasy: "Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heaven and earth; because love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things. He that loveth, flieth, runneth, rejoiceth; he is free and is not bound. He giveth all for all and hath all in all; because he resteth in One Highest above all things." There is a last addition, which might be that of any faithful knight to the giver of his token: "He that is not prepared to suffer all things, and to stand by the will of his Beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover."

*this is Christian pragmatism*

*II, xii*

The culmen of the *Imitation,* central as is the crucifix above the altar of the sanctuary, is the chapter "Of the Royal Way of the Holy Cross." Symbols themselves, if they strike deep, in the end become more than symbols; they are incorporate with life. "In the Cross is salvation, in the Cross is life, in the Cross is protection against our enemies, in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the Cross is strength of mind, in the Cross joy of spirit, in the Cross the height of virtue, in the Cross the perfec-

tion of sanctity. There is no salvation of the soul, but in the Cross!"

*choirs of the Saints*

Saints are of many stamps and traditions. Among them are Archangels, Biblical Patriarchs, the Mother of Jesus, Apostles, Martyrs; but of them all it is the corps of those blessed ones who in the great Age of the Church sought, in their varied fashions, to live the Holy Life—it is these who give to the word its wealth. Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Louis the King, Vincent de Paul, —such figures make the image; and with them women like Catherine of Siena, Joan of Arc, Theresa, organizers of men and affairs as well as seers of visions and harkeners to voices angelic. The Maid of Domremy received her canonization only in the twentieth century, but the halo had already long rested upon her.

*God's commoners*

COMMON FOLK, also, were Christ's men. Moralities and miracles were acted for them, and they were shown mysteries, pictured, sung, worshipped. On festal days—and the Church was liberal of these—carols and sports as well as the pageantry of processions put laughter and illumination into their lives, drab and local as for the more part they were. The Church was not afraid of color, for the promise of Paradise must be made evident and glorious; and it could be kindly about little daily things. After all, shot with fault and in its

bad hours pitiless, it was still the one great champion of the commoner and his defense before the mighty of this world. Jesus had taught that men in humble walks possess souls, treasurable in the eyes of Heaven; and his body's last repose in God's Acre was the final right of the meanest among Christians. Also, they possessed sanctuary,—violated, once and again, as had been the old sanctuaries of burning Troy, but theirs to cling to and to put their hope in. The Good Bishop was their trust, and the Good Shepherd .... It was a faith, and a faith that was spiritual.

*hard humor and common sense*

Not that there failed the hard humor and stiffened common sense of people who know what they are about. They were not clowns and canaille, and many a clerk rose from their ranks, to see with shrewd eyes and to judge as a man should judge. Only, the bases of judgment were still those of his own good time (this is important); and they were measured out of the cloth of Christendom, which, in so large a part, was of his weaving;—for folk do not lingeringly live under an order, social or intellectual, of which they do not approve. The morals of the Church, its ethic, *was* approved in pattern; the Christian life as it was understood *was* deemed exemplary; and the common man's honesty, like the knight's honor or the *noblesse oblige* of the aristocracy, gave the conscious metrics of daily conduct. Knowing these things, what to expect of lord and priest, and what to exact of himself, the

man of the people could and did move with an understanding mind and a wit quick to see motley under chivalric heraldry or under church heraldry. Peasants are slow to effect social reformations; but they are as patient as are their own soils; and in time they uproot the noisome and the fruitless.

*John Langland again,—paraphrasing*

Then got they them horses to betake them thither,
And Favel (Favor) set forth with foals enough,
Sat Mede (Bribery) on a shrieve, all newly shod,
Sat False on an assizer, softly trotting,
Sat Favor on a flatterer, fetchingly attired.
They had notaries none, annoyed they were
That Simony and Civil (corruptors each) should go afoot.
But then swore Simony and Civil both
That summoners should be saddled, and serve them each one,
And provisors be apparelled as if they were palfreys,—
"Sir Simony himself shall sit upon their backs.
"Deans and sub-deans, draw you together,
"Archdeacons, officers, with all your registers,
"Let saddle them with silver, our sin to suffer,—
"Such as adultery, divorce, usury dissembled,—
"To bear bishops about, abroad on their visitings!
"Privy-tongued Paulines, for complaints in consistory,
"Shall serve myself, who Civil am named;
"Harness the commissary, our cart shall he lead;
"Fetch us good victuals at fornicators cost.
"And for Liar make a cart, long to lead others,—
"Friars and imposters that run on their feet!"
Thus False and Favor fared forth together,
With Mede in their midst, and *such* wise men after!

Were it not composed half a century later, this pictured cavalcade might well have served as a pilgrim prologue to the Purgatorio. The sins of the time (*we* should not use the word 'sin', of course) are as clear-seen as is the destination of their riders. And this, in that day, men of every class understood.

**The Church Triumphant**

DANTE'S Comedy of God is like a third Testament of the Christian faith. Among books it is unique in the richness and precision of its summary of a whole age of civilization, gathering into one image lives and skies, physical worlds and spiritual worlds, time and eternity. The Majesty of God was a frequent sculptural theme in the Middle Ages; Dante made of the Universe such a Majesty.

It is idle to recount and cite from a book which is already the corner of a library, but it is not amiss to recall again its great trinitarian image; for the Trinity of Creation which it celebrates is the Divine Trinity of Christian dogma. World and Work are one word, where God is concerned, and that word is The Word which is His Will's fiat and His Person's exemplification. Once again: Creation is Theophany,—this is the key spiritual to the Mediæval mind. Heaven, Hell and Purgatory are *the other side* of this Earth,—nearer than the Antipodes, near indeed as a man's own soul,—and quick to break open whenever the soul's raveners, Lion and Leopard and Wolf, turn life back from its

tangles, to seek first in gloom, then in penance, and last through illuminations unpierceable the blaze of Truth which is God's Will.... Thereafter, swoon and recession, back to *this side*—but with soul made content because of the vision. "His Will is our Peace"—herein is the last codicil of the newer Testament; it is Christianity's answer to Pagan fatalism; it is Christendom's transfiguration of death. *'Paradiso, III*

Fra Angelico, it is said, when he created his Last Judgement, turned the depiction of Hell over to his apprentices while he himself painted, with minutely prolonged delight, the gentle and flowery Paradise, with its swards and its winged things. But Fra Angelico is the Middle Ages in its tenderest moment, and ever in a virgin moment. Dante faced Hell, and stalked through it, blanched with wisdom, as must be the man who sees moral reality and knows it to be *the* Reality. It is 'literal', he says, *literal* is this poem! the *literal* soul after death!....and he put many a known man or woman, there, pitilessly, in the burning chest, hell's firebox, or yonder, wonderingly, upon a spheréd throne. Between stand the ascents of Purgatory which a man must mount, rim above rim, as mounts the seeker after Truth, range beyond range, toward that which alone can satisfy. Light streams from the ascents through Paradise, swifter than measured or imagined speeds, more massed with splendors than the telescope's reflections of suns and star-dust,—but at the height not even spiritual eyes can endure it, for the Light it-

*'Paradiso', XXXIII*

self is transformed, at the peak into a Love.... "power failed.... but already Desire and Will were rolled, even as a wheel that revolveth equally, by that Love which moves the Sun and all the Stars."

*Everything* is transfigured in the Divine Comedy. There is earth and man's life, and their *literal* being is a vision; there is the great phantasm of the hierarchical Universe, with God, its Prime Mover throned above, and its *literal* being is a Will and a Love of which retributive Justice itself is a part; there is all this as moral theophany in itself, and its *literal* being is the inscribed Trinity echoed in every substructure of God's Work, and again of the poet's. The whole is the Majesty of God....

*"O Eternal Light! Self-abiding, Self-knowing, Self-understood, Self-comprehending, Thou dost love! Thou dost smile!"*

> O luce eterna, che sola in te sidi,
> sola t' intendi, e da te intelletta
> ed intendente te, ami ed arridi!

*"the Emperor who reigns above", Dante names Him; Dürer's 'Adoration of the Trinity', Vienna, paints an idealized Holy Roman Emperor,— crown and beard*

GOD, as the Middle Ages knew Him, is the height of Majesty and Himself the crown of miracles. His Sovereignty is beyond appeal or desire of appeal; it is beyond dialectic and reason, but it is grasped by faith and known in Revelation and embodied in the Church. There were the books,— but for the great majority of men, who were no doctors and who knew their cathedrals of stone vastly better than the word-built cathedrals of the *Summæ*, the visible and social images were the distinct and sufficient emblems of their religion. The triple tiara of the Pope, the keys of Peter.... somewhere yon-

der in Rome was a great lord, Vicar of his Master, under whose direction men held the marches of Christendom safe and strong. Be faithful to the Faith: there are benedictions in this world; there are beatitudes in that.... The outer Christendom was a vast feudalism, under crowns and Emperors; the inner, was a vaster with God Himself for its summit and suzerain.

IN THE UFFIZI GALLERY there are three representations of the Annunciation which, to me, are not only lovely beyond loveliness but also are eloquent of the finest in the spirit of Christianity during the great Age of the Church. The earlier, and perhaps most wonderful of the three is that of Simone Martini, portraying in the Messenger the most unearthly angel in the world of art, and in the Virgin a woman whose face is the Mystery embalmed—neither joy nor sorrow nor submission nor rejection is her response to the stark lilies and the "Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum," but some strangeness, world-distant, as of one who knew deeply her own heart. The other pictures are by artists contemporary to one another, and they fall toward the close of the period. That by Botticelli depicts in the Virgin one who is already the Madonna, with every anguish known, and the Annunciation comes to her like a sharp wound, like a sword sheathed in her flesh—and is not refused; the Angel, too, is remote from Paradise, and knows all of

*contemporary of Dante*

*latter sixteenth century*

Mary's unrejected grief: here again no word can say what the picture speaks; God's grace is in it, and all mortality's. In the Lorenzo di Credi only the Messenger knows tears; the Virgin is the most girlishly adorable figure that art has created, utterly innocent and but just surprised into a life which she does not comprehend—nor does she comprehend what may imply the crossed hands on the bosom of the Angel, pitying.

*though the lovely 'Vierge d'Annonciation' of the Collection Doisteau is similarly adorable!*

Greek art showed to men how splendidly they might be men. Early Christians strove failingly to give expressive form to their ideal of Christ Saviour, so unfamiliar to their world. But with the Middle Ages and its passing mankind had traversed many understandings, and some were visible and some could but shine through the visible. No ancient image conveys the strange tenderness, the enhallowed quality, which underlies a thousand Christian works—little wooden saints, pitted stones in their niches, cenotaphs, and the painted marvels of shrine and triptych. Such changes—ethereal as the transformations wrought by dissolvent dews,—such changes do not occur without cause; and the cause is in the springing sources of time, beyond bodies and corporealities, which from Age to Age transform man's expressive experience in revealing its spiritual moulds.... For the rest, the Middle Age, also, is an Annunciation.

## VI

THE BIBLE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

*a century after Innocent papal suzerainty was still asserted by Boniface VIII (1294-1303),—but this was the end*

TWO DEVASTATIONS sign with sterility the period that lies between the apotheosis of the Mediæval Church in the Papacy of Innocent III and the swift beginnings of the Modern World. These are the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) and the Black Death (1340-1450): War and Plague march together for their century, and an age of human culture becomes a memory. It has been so in human affairs from the commencement of the readings; the Classic World is divided from the Ancient Oriental by vast disruptions of nations and reapportionments of peoples; the Mediæval is separated from the Roman Age by razed cities, by depopulations and repopulations; and the gap between Mediæval and Modern Christendom is only in degree minor in its glooms. Conventionally the year 1453 is made the milestone of time which shall part the two periods, and it does indeed possess a dramatic appeal: it was the year which marked the close of the devastating struggle of France and England, there at the heart of the Atlantic civilization; it was the year which saw in the fall of Constantinople the final encroachment of Asia upon Europe, the last great narrowing of Christendom before Islam; and it was also the year in which the first printed pages

of the Bible were drawn from the press of Gutenberg in the city of Mainz. A completed chapter was closed and a new one opened with intials in A.D. 1453.

It is only symbolically, of course, that periods turn so neatly with a date; and for three quarters of a century after the key events, the new age is engaged in finding itself, and the old, unaware of its own passing, is expending faded energies in regilding its tarnished broideries: late Gothic florescences, the *A.D. 1520* embellished chivalry of the romance, the Field of the Cloth of Gold! But contemporary with these was the invention of printing and the voyages of discovery. Gutenberg had devised his book-making art by 1450 and completed his first edition of the Bible in 1456; by the year 1500 toward forty thou- *incunabula, editions seldom more than 300 or 400 copies* sand editions of books had been printed in European countries and many millions of copies were in circulation: this alone meant intellectual revolution. Then came the great voyages: Columbus sailed to America in 1492; Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1497; Magellan circumnavigated the globe 1519-1522. Man's world could never again be quite the same; and Christendom, blocked by land, had at sea out-flanked the advance of Islam.

The decade from 1520 to 1530 is one of the most significant in Modern History. Two great regenerations of the mind, Humanism, with its reversions to Classical reason, and the Reformation, with its effort to reconstruct Christianity from its founda-

tions, challenged the seated but decrepit authority of the Church, and opened door and window to vigorous airs. Humanism, coming from the South, was first in the field, with Erasmus in the Low Countries, Budeus in Paris, Thomas More in Britain. While the movement remained within the Church, it was not of it; but rather, aggressive, keen-minded, tart of temper and sharp with retort, it was as cleanly protestant in the realms of scholar's science as ever should be the leaders of the Reform in the domains of faith or theology. In 1530 Francis I founded the Collège de France in Paris, a school devoted to Greek and Latin and Hebrew and Mathematics, and held by a handful of scholars who were *not* clerks, under the very eaves of the Sorbonne, then already mossed with Scholastic sanctities: it was the first recognized challenge of ecclesiastical by lay learning. In 1530, also, or perhaps the year before, a canon in remote Frauenburg circulated his first description of a new theory of the Order of the Heavens, making Sun, not Earth, the cosmic center—"for who could in this most beautiful temple, the heaven, place this lamp in another or a better place than that from which it can at one time illuminate the whole?" The theory of Copernicus was to await for better than a decade its great publication in the *De Revolutionibus* (a copy of which was placed in his hands on his death-bed in 1543), and for a century or more beyond this for any general acceptation; but in it, its author had placed, all

*Humanism*

*the College desired to go to Greek and Hebrew texts for Biblical authority; the Sorbonne insisted on the Vulgate's sanctities!*

*'Commentariolus'*

unwittingly to them, the instrument which should most make inevitable the work of the Reformers. The Mediæval Church had committed itself too fatally to its intricate union of the physical and the spiritual orders of reality, its incarnate dogma was too passionately corporeal, to enable it to free itself; that division of the Church of which the quest was not the engloried Monarch of the Universe, but the breath of the Holy Spirit, was to find in the new science a liberation if not a revelation.

**Reformation**

THE REFORMATION came from the North. In 1520 Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms, for the Protestant movement was already under way. In 1522 Luther's translation of the Bible into German began to appear (to be completed in 1532, and thereafter to form the foundation of most of the translations into Teutonic tongues). Meantime, in France, John Calvin was studying under the first translator of the Bible into French; and he was acquainting himself with the Gospels in Greek. The years 1524-30 also saw the appearance of the French translation by Lefèvre d'Étaples, who was saying to the Sorbonne that Christ is the fount of all dogma, that dogma is the work of men, and that faith counts for more than works, faith and a "return to the Evangel,"—for Evangelism was taking on a new meaning. Tyndale's Bible, the first popular text in English, was

*John Wyclif taught a like Evangelism in 14th c. England; his Bible is before the day of printing*

beginning in 1525 its printing in Cologne ("there was no place to do it in all England"), the work to be carried forward even to the prison from which Tyndale was to pass to his execution, 1536. Thus the great tongues which were to formulate the learning of Modern Times, even at the founding of their letters, received this ancient literature from the Orient into the body of their own; nor has any influence been greater in the shaping of Western expression.

Meanwhile, in the year 1521, a Spanish soldier, battle-wounded and convalescent, turned his thoughts to the religious anarchy that seemed to be gathering and determined to devote his life to a new militancy for the Church; he was Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus.... In Germany the religious wars were already under way, to continue for half a century, passed from nation to nation like a contagion. There was no chivalry in these wars, and martyrs in many lands were marched in gruesome troops to fiery stakes.

*Jesuits, wars, martyrs*

THE TWO CENTURIES that lie between A.D. 1500 and 1700 are of years that mark a vast accommodation of mankind to new worlds. Europe ceased to be a peninsular province of the Eastern Hemisphere and expanded into the Globe's colonizer, charting seas, discovering lands, and reaping the exotic harvests of unnumbered remote plantations.

*sixteenth-seventeenth centuries*

*geography* Geography came to have a new meaning and the art of the map-maker flourished. All the old outlooks collapsed; the entire scene of human life was cast in novel projections; and the descendants of the sons *ethnology* of Noah were constrained to recognize as of their kith sea-sown peoples of unpremised colors and physiognomies. The mere bizarrérie of the discoveries confounded men's sense and nonplussed their *astronomy* minds.... Cosmography, also. Copernicus is followed by Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Newton, re-shaping not only the imaged form but also the conceived structure of the visible universe. Indeed, Columbus and Copernicus are veritable fathers of a newer theology, commanding that it become more spiritual and earth-emancipated. The simple and near union of physical and spiritual, which with Dante had been so literal, had become forevermore impossible; so that when we return to the theme, in Milton, it is Raphael's rôle to argue with Adam the indifference of the scheme of the stars to man's essential good,—

*'P.L.,' bk. VIII, vv.* 119-122

> God, to remove His ways from human sense,
> Placed heav'n from earth so far, that earthly sight,
> If it presume, might err in things too high,
> And no advantage gain.

Actually the distance from Dante to Milton is hugely more than transition from one to another system of astronomy; it is an exchange of spiritual substance and the presentation of another God, now

the Thinker of Time as then the Sustainer of Space. A totally distinct metaphysic is implied, which the Modern Period was to see become actual.

*a new Christianity, Protestant and Catholic*

The fact is that the very experience of a changing knowledge necessitated a changed Christianity; the new science and the old faith could not indwell in the same mind. It would, certainly, be only mistake to assume that the leaders of the Reformation themselves recognized the aid which the scientific revolution was bringing them. This was far from true, for they were rarely men who were at all learned in science, and more than this it is the Reformers who were the earlier in the field. Then again, long before the Northerners knew much of them, the Catholic faith was to profit from the discoveries. Columbus, reporting to his monarchs, stresses souls for conversion as slaves for enrichment, and there is no reason to doubt the depth of his sincerities; before a century had passed, while the Protestant Churches were still struggling into form, Catholic missionaries were scattered through the isles and continents. This was, however, not the old Catholicism taking new life and energies. The inspiration of the Church had passed from Italy to Spain, and the Catholic no less than the forming Protestant world was caught with the enthusiasms of unforseen conceptions. There is no nobler figure in the sixteenth century than is that of the Catholic 'Apostle of the Indians,' Las Casas, in the Red Man's behalf proclaiming the rights of man, and

thereby laying foundations for all men's liberties; it is he who is true Father of the Revolutions.

*corners of Modernity*

Thus, as the movements take shape, they are: first, the religious movement, harking back to Wyclif and Hus in the fourteenth century and well antecedent in the North to all else; second, humanism, coming north in the very hour of the great voyages and uniting naturally with the spirit of free inquiry about to break in the sciences of nature, the two combined being but a return to what was best in the antique world of Greece and Rome; third, the scientific revolution, perilously to make its way and slowly, and only in the seventeenth century to become seated in philosophy. The outburst of a new doctrine of man was there also; for nations were forming, each to become Christian after its national pattern. So the Modern World sets its corners.

*Bibliolatry*

CHRISTIANITY during this period became a religion of the Book with a new intensity; and men became jealous of Holy Writ, as the revealed Word, to a degree which the past ages of the faith could not have guessed. In the primitive period Gospels and Epistles had been circulated not as word-made texts or oracles, but simply as tracts of *the* Evangel, as despatches bearing detail of the glad message. In later periods canons of the Scriptures and canonical interpretations were established as a central possession, but still, for the vast mass of mankind, the Book was but one among the array of

sacred objects which constituted the outward symbols of the faith; and it was an object far less enlightening than the painted story on the church wall, or, for that matter, than the glittering vestments and dramatic rituals of the Mass; phrases were taken out of the Scriptures and placed in the rituals, or they were made texts of homilies, or they were added as decoration to altar-pieces, but in each case they were ornamental of something more essential to the religion, as the layman should see it. The Book was present, as an article of faith, but vastly less significant or salvatory than the sanctified wafer of the uplifted Host.

*Scriptures replace saints*

In the period of the Reformation all this changes. The Bible is unlocked from its lectern and put into the hands and homes of its readers; and as of a moment the Scriptures rather than the Church become the seat of authority, and to the Holy Book are transferred most of the old sanctities that had before gone to edifices and rites and remote Popes and Saints; the Church was unfrocked, and the Word itself became the vehicle of grace. It was the period when the abbeys were destroyed, tapestries, manuscripts and all portable treasure carried off to my lord's manor, the frescoes whitewashed out, even the rich glass shattered,—all the old iniquities of the Devil-in-tonsure!.... For men's *minds* had changed their complexions, and *thinking* was in a new imagery. *Eyemindedness* in a fresh sense, less illuminated but more deceptively communicative, was coming in rapidly with the multiplying impres-

*'visual typographic' thinking*

sions off the presses. For ourselves, we know very well how facile is 'visual typographic' thinking (as the psychologists call it); we know that for the learned of this world color has been put away from the reasoning mind, color and the eloquence of speaking form, even with other childish things; when a man becomes a master of wise lore, he is a man of letters in a new and unique sense; his whole thought is literate, and in peril of verbosity; meantime our illiterate wax passionate from spelled-out words as the billboards shout at them and the evening 'pink' glares its headlines; while in the efficient world of offices, there is nothing left unlettered that can be lettered: the whole universe is alphabetized. All this means a new sense-perception, and it is one that has changed the mind's world more than we can guess. And with other changes it has changed religion, also.... Of course, it were absurd to name this altering mode of the dress of thinking as more than a facilitating accompaniment of the historical movement,—even while it is difficult to doubt that it *is* facilitative, so that at the finis the Missionary with his Book, both in blacks, could be, as it were, the last nudity of the visible faith. But the impulse had begun before the invention of printing (necessarily slow in its effects, too), for both Wyclif and Hus were profoundly interested in the circulation of the Scriptures; Gutenberg's art merely came to the aid of a movement that was already abroad in the world.

*in the Middle Age a word was 'flatus vocis', a breath; no term could more sharply designate the psychical transfiguration that has taken place*

Is it wholly fanciful to see in this new-acquired imperiousness of verbal imagery some account of the magnification of the *Word* in the Modern era? It is a Word which is no longer metaphysical, a Logos, but instead is alphabetiform and sacrosanct,—*literal* Scriptures, fundamentalist creeds and quarrels, slogans, formularies, captions, edicts of councils and bulls of popes, and in later days criticism textual and higher, and higher indexed. Not at all is it exclusively Protestant or Catholic. The silent Quaker awaiting his 'gift of tongues' at the one extreme; casuistry, the ready and profuse reasoning of the Jesuit at the other,—both exhibit a reliance upon the efficacy of words which is perhaps not wholly misplaced,—for in words are to be found the keys to many passions.

*esp., 'Pastor æternus'*

SPAIN, taking over the direction of the campaign against a rising Protestantism, gave origin to three engines of resistance. The Society of Jesus formed itself in Paris, but was Spanish through its founder and spirit. It is a curiously mixed force. Its members are scholars, and they have done a vast work for modern learning; they are educators, and their schools are themselves organons of reason; they have been such missionaries as make glorious this labor, alike in Arctic barrens and tropic swamps, fearless in enterprise and splendid in their sacred martyrdoms: in spite of treachery, disease, starva-

**Counter Reformation**

*S.J.*

tion, savage torture, the 'black robes' have made their way into all earth's desolations and have signed them repeatedly, in their own blood, with the sign of the Cross. And yet, in an age of reason, employing reason, adept in it, logical and shrewd, and read in learning old and new, the Jesuits have moved down into our own day with little but their organization to proclaim them. For in an age of the mind's emancipation, they, the most profoundly, have abnegated freedom and have sought to conceal their abnegation in a cloak of piety; their editions are prefaced with reservations; their clarities are figurate; their victories, if not in turns of the phrase, are critiques rather than constructions; and while they have made Aquinas readable in a modern sense, of themselves they have produced no greatness of thought. Organized on a military model—as should be a soldier's society!—they made of obedience their prime virtue; but obedience, where reason is agent and truth the stake, is reason's throttling and truth's sacrifice,—and the world has recognized this in the mind which Jesuitry has moulded: like the Jesuit architecture it is built for the façade. . . . Superb men and heroes are in this army, but they have armed them with the subtleties of logic; and in an age when faith has found in reason its betrayals, they are not least among the betrayers. Odd, with what a differing admiration our thoughts turn to the Paulist Fathers!

*Jesuit 'rationalization'*

*Inquisition*

Spanish also is the Inquisition. This institution

is the most hateful, the most blasphemous, that Christendom has produced, and it should be mentioned only to be cursed; it has blotched with blood the religion which its agents professed, and it has made history unreadable with its cruelties. Not that the Inquisition is the first or the only agency to hide leprosy under the habit of priests. Hus was burned at the stake in 1415 in a hilarity of bigot's treason; Servetus suffered a like fate in Geneva in 1553 at the hands of the Calvinists, with Calvin himself as prosecutor; and these are but two of the half-forgotten martyrdoms (though God remembers them, all!) which gave example to the Inquisitors who burned Giordano Bruno in Rome in 1600, and made hell at home on earth in the autos-da-fé of three centuries! *Auto-da-fé,* 'act of faith'! The very name is horrible irony!.... Two images which I would fain relinquish are inked eraselessly into my mind's fibre. Both are of pictures, works of mean execution, without craftsmanship or taste; but each as of eyewitness record. The one, I stumbled upon years ago in a Fifth Avenue window, near the intersection with Broadway. The scene was a Low Countries town square, early seventeenth century,—a horseman in morion and cuirass, men-at-arms with halberds, townsfolk spectators, women at the windows, for the event was gala! and in the center a huge beam hung crane-wise with a woman, trussed up in chains, being lowered to the fire that was to roast her bunched body as a spitted fowl might be

*Servetus happened to be burnt by Calvinists —'ad majorem Dei gloriam'! —He was under sentence of the same fate by Romanists,—pious folk all!*

roasted. Three other women in the foreground were awaiting to fill out the day, bound and agonized,—and beside them a Dominican with his cross! The second, a print of the burning of Portuguese Jews in the cathedral city of Lima,—and again there are the folk, gathered on the gallery of the cathedral church for their better edification! and again the agonized victims, garbed in the sacrilege of the sanbenito! and again the Dominican with his cross!.... In each case the artist's interest is the depiction of the ruinous suffering of the victims, and in each case the art succeeds.... It is idle, it is blasphemous! for any apologist to say *tu quoque* because other men have committed other crimes in the name of Christ. For such deeds I can never forgive their perpetrators; they have mutilated my human nature, and infinitely beyond any Adam, they have mutilated all men's! From their sin the spirits of their victims, though they plead for mercy at the throne of grace, can never secure their release! nay, the Eternal God cannot absolve them! incurably their souls are seamed with hellishness.... Yes, the Inquisition fettered the intelligence of a great block of mankind for the Modern centuries. No doubt, also, it saved the South to the Church....

*reproduced in the 'Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris,' n.s. XVIII, 1926, —accompanying an article giving names of victims and citing documents*

*penance and Spanish art*

Can it be that Spanish religious art represents, in part, the penance? There is none other art so grief-stricken, none other so tortured, so timed to the strokes of the flagellations. This is not thinking of Murillo, but of the thousand and then thousands of

the santos of penitentes, and the crucifixes with their wasted bodies of Christ, and their blood so unredeemedly real. In our museums we pass them curiously,—it is the Spanish section,—but what they can tell is of a whole consciousness—keen and lacerated—of God's agony, such as no other people can know. Letters were slower in coming, in Spain; and men's minds lingered with vision and symbol; and if these minds were shut off by their terrible Protectors of the Faith from the lettered thought of the North, still in their own strange fashion they discovered a protestantism of the soul. Northward the churches were spoiled of their treasure and the loveliness rapt away or broken by crass hands; but in Spain the art itself, taking our bodily form, emaciated it and sublimated it, and then won from its wreckage an essence that is in itself the spirit purified. It was not words alone that should bespeak the Holy Spirit; the entire religious art of the Spanish soul does it, and with a vision which is more ghostly than disembodiment. Only El Greco paints a picture which is also a prayer, or illuminates Calvary from Gethsemane, or from fingers that are flames imparts the benediction! So Spain, also, received her Gift of Tongues....

*crucifixes*

*El Greco*

WITHIN the Catholic Church the new spirit won its greatest victory in Jansenism and Port Royal. The followers of Jansen as to theology

**Modern Gnosticism**

*Jansenism* were essentially Catholic Calvinists, and in their manner of life conformers to the new ideals of the Oratory rather than to the older pattern of the Monastery; they were simply men of devotional mind, gathered together or living apart, neither of, nor out of, the world,—in effect, a Protestant conception, laying its essential stress upon the individual, face to face with his own soul. Over against the Jansenists were the Jesuits, aggressively of the world, and determinedly making religion livable for the worldly intelligence,—urban in thought, as the Jansenists were rural and withdrawn. But in one particular the two movements, hostile in their day, resemble one another: both were intent upon dialectic and its forms, and both shared in the modern man's chimerical reliance upon discursive reason and the wordy patterns of logical analysis.

*Pascal* Excepting greatly Blaise Pascal. His is the most prophetic genius of modern times—penetrating in its comprehensions, withering in its judgements, and lighted with the graces of angels. At the very beginning of the great Gospel of Science, he comprehended all the possibilities of scientific truth, and proclaimed them; the form and figure and dimensions of this type of knowledge were revealed to him, so that to the *pensée* on the 'Disproportion of Man' there is little to add and nothing to take away, where one is concerned to know what science (as we understand science) can give to human understanding. "For, in fine, what is man in the midst

*ed. Brunschvig, no. 72*

of Nature? A *nothing* in comparison with the infinite, an *all* in comparison with nothingness: a mean between nothing and all. Infinitely far from comprehending the extremes, the end of things and their principles are for him inevitably concealed in an impenetrable secrecy; he is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness whence he is derived and the infinity in which he is swallowed up.... Through want of having contemplated these infinities, men are rashly borne to the investigation of Nature, as if they had some proportion with it! It is a strange thing that they have wished to comprehend the principles of things, and from thence even to reach to a knowledge of all, by a presumption as infinite as their object!.... Our intelligence in the order of things intelligible holds the same rank as does our body in the extension of Nature."

Not here is Pascal despising the work of science; he is only estimating it. He himself is notable in mathematics and physics; but, understanding their charm, he refused to be deluded by it; and were he to walk again today, seeing all that has followed his hour, he would leave his word unchanged, having foreknown as possible all that time has made actual in the extensions of what is, yet today, but a vaster geometry. "Ce qui passe la géométrie nous surpasse"—he would say it again, and with the same meaning, that "the highest reach of reason is to recognize that there are an infinity of things which surpass it." He dares to add that man is not less

*of Plato likewise this can be said*

*no. 267*

than dual in his enlightenments, and that of our two powers the geometrized reason is the lesser in penetration: "The heart has its reasons which the reason knows not.... It is the heart which perceives God, and not the reason. Behold what is faith: God made apparent to the heart, not to the reason."

*nos. 277, 278*

Surely the great texts of Protestantism are those which speak of the Holy Spirit and its gifts; and it is these also which most underwrite the utterances of Pascal. Not the ecclesiastical vehicle, but the inner voice is the authority, from the very fact that it also is an understanding in which present truth and prophetic hope and sustaining love unite. "When he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth".... "Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us".... "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." And when Pascal adds his theodicy, it is as simple as the Scriptural phrases, and as rich in meaning: "The conduct of God, who disposes of all things with gentleness, is to put religion into the mind by reasons and into the heart by grace."

*John* 16:13

*Rom.* 5:5

*Rom.* 14:7

*no.* 185

Always it is *man* that he sees, man as he is in the eye of God; and at the end he discovers a *proportionality* of man's nature which heals the nightmare-like disproportion which is our only known terminus to the pathways of geometry: "The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the mean, for therein we find both

*no.* 527

God and our affliction." If any will ponder this text he will find within it a newer gnosticism, needing perchance no other exegesis than that profoundest of all characterizations of the Christian faith, Pascal's own added comment: "Christianity is strange: it decrees that man recognize that he is vile, even abominable, and it decrees that he should wish to be like God!" *no. 537*

*gods and their makers*

HEREIN is the great irreducible: Man condemns himself for what he is, and in the diviner image of what he would be, he finds a God who is his salvation. He sees his own bodily imperfections and decrepitudes, and he shapes him deities that are stainless and immortal in beauty, as did the Hellenes. He is stung by pains and groans under afflictions, and he dramatizes divine conquerors of pain and death. With Socrates he knows his own ignorance, and he paints omniscience as the deepest color of a Mind that is all-comprehending—for which not a sparrow falls unheeded. He suspires with the gasp of a fatal weakness, inborn with him from before his beginnings, and he shouts the glory of Omnipotence. His hates beget hates, his passions foul with self-feeding, and he turns for consolation to the image of a Love that is cleansed and self-emancipated.... Yes, man creates a compensatory better self, and calls this God: such is the simple formula of the god-makers, altering their

images with each newer realization of their own unpitying failings; and the whole theogony of the human race can be inwritten as commentary upon such text. Yet when it is written (as in our day it is), what then will have been greatly said,—what, that is of the truth? Indeed, nothing! For the quest which is profoundly beneath all, is asking, not what human failing God is shaped to satisfy, but far more deeply by what art man can have been born to discover both his defects and their measures. "*Truth* is the striving after Divinity!"—Plutarch startles us into a self-recognition that is also the one revelation. Man .... is .... that kind .... of creature .... (let us say the words slowly, and with prolonging emphasis) .... for whom .... *Truth* .... can be .... measure .... It is only through the Pattern that we know the actual; it is only in an ideal which is defiant of actuality that we can achieve any realization at all, whether of Nature or of Man's Nature. We do, we ourselves, we human beings, do put our one trust exclusively in a world of Forms-made-divine which unremittingly transubstantiates the flesh of our troubled experience into the serenity of a spiritual understanding.... If this be delusion it is yet the most portentous that is created in us out of the Womb of Time, such a shaper of us that all our knowledge and all our science, all that we celebrate in whatever is sense-withdrawn, is vastly its lie. But this neither in act nor in thought do we believe. Nay rather, of our own dim-forming selves, our judgement, at once most pathetic and

*'De Is. et Osir.', ad init.*

most profound, is that experience and character, realization and possibility, are perennially discrepant in us; that, such are the accidents of mortality, no man can be quite true to his better self,—nor indeed does any, who is with all his troth, human, desire that in his temporal moments this better, which is most his prize, shall be exhausted of its meaning; the height of our insight is to see that we are imperfect and to rejoice in our vision of perfection. And this, also, is most wonderfully our worship of God. .... "In times of affliction knowledge of external things will never console me for ignorance of moral truth; but moral knowledge will console me always for ignorance of these other." Moral knowledge is, indeed, a mystery,—coming up from what remote contradiction of real and ideal we cannot guess, save to say that it is a truth of our creation and the truth of our humanity. No natural science has even begun a chapter of its understanding; though of this every religion of mankind is some expression, strayed or trued.... Herein is man's disproportion, decreed from before the time of his beginnings, that he should *not* find *himself* in his animal hours. It is an anomaly beyond any rule of Nature that we know.

*Pascal, Pensées, no. 67*

*perfectibility*

RELIGION conveys its meanings through many myths. Of these none has been in its day more convincing than is that of the perfectibility of man. Originally a theological dogma, emblematic

of the potency of the divine grace both to save and to regenerate, in our more recent centuries it has passed over into a sweeping laudation, not of men, but of human nature as time shall find it out. We are to be sure in bond to imperfection (so the doctrine would say); defect is in our substance and miasma is in our soul; but we are none the less capable of deliverance, even from ourselves; and what is more, our own powers may become the agents which shall uplift us; there is an 'onward' for mankind, and that onward *must* be an 'upward'. This is the doctrine which, beginning in the seventeenth century, became a passion in the eighteenth; and in the nineteenth, with the high fantasies of the teachings of evolution to sustain it, became a religion. In its intellectual form it is the converse of the doctrine of a human helplessness that can be salved only by divine mercy, which, beginning with Paul and formulated by Augustine, finds its climax in the hard predestinarianism of Calvinist and Jansenist alike. But in its inspirited essence, it is the same truth, as seen with a complementary understanding: it is man imperfect disbelieving in the reality of his own evil.

*'Traité du Vide'*

Pascal himself, in his scientific moment, was a believer in progress, and spoke of it; but more is due to his great contemporary, Descartes. If for no other reason, Descartes merits his title of 'father' to modern philosophy but just for the military decisiveness with which he makes the 'natural light' of reason man's prime endowment—prime not for be-

*'Discours de la Méthode'*

lief alone, but also for regeneration. What Revelation had been to the Mediævalist, *Nature's light* was to be to the Modern,—Descartes made this dogmatic. His century laid hold of the idea with caution, and the clerical minds would have none of it; but it was fated to become such a gospel in the world of morals as should be the theory of Copernicus for the universe of stars,—Descartes, in the end, more than Copernicus throwing the thought of the Middle Ages into the shadows of the incomprehensible. Few nowadays can read Dante with understanding, not because his astronomy is difficult, but because the inscription over Hell's portal is unthinkable; for this inscription is the text not only of the greatest of poems, but also of the thought of an age which is to us more distant than Classical or Primitive. Copernicus' heliocentric scheme of the heavens revised the astronomy; Descartes' transfer of confidence to the natural light revolutionized the morals; and Mediævalism became thenceforth unthinkably remote.

*Revelation vs. the Natural Light*

*"Justice moved my high Maker, Divine Power created me, supreme Wisdom, and primal Love"*

Remote .... and yet near. For the thing that is at the bottom, in the Middle Age and in ours, is identical. Our humanitarian faith is only in form the reversal of their theological credo; in substance we and they share the one great sense—Christian, because it was what Jesus himself most understood —of the value, of the *salvability* of men's lives, individually. Here is the only democracy that counts for aught in this world, infinitely nobler than any politic of the Greeks! The first move toward its at-

*salvation through Science*

tainment was to convince men of their own truth-seeing powers. In varying degrees the Protestant sects were coming to do this, in their stresses upon the inward experience of the light of grace, upon vocation and sanctification. But decisively it was the Cartesian elevation of the light of the natural reason that was to bring with impact our human self-confidence. Science should no longer be the handmaiden of theology, but itself the revelation. The new thinking, no less than the old, understood human evil, but no more did it rely helplessly upon God's mercy for man's salvation: man, foreseeingly, was to achieve salvation for himself.... Whence might come his foresight, or by what connivance he should discover that his faiths were truths, of these none thought to ask.... Strangely men dreamed that they knew their own good, unholpen, nor could any disaster of their man-made history reveal a better truth.... The 'reason of the heart' had been abnegated by the intellectual world; and to account for this Modern philosophy was created.

*not even* 1914-1918

**God's apologists**

MEDIÆVAL PHILOSOPHY has for its essential concern the exposition of God's nature as this nature is hinted in revelation and forthshown in the familiar world; the divine attributes of justice and wisdom and power, of love and providence and glory, were esteemed to have been given Scripturally, along with the mystery of the Trinity,

and it remained for philosophy but to adjust our understanding of these revelations to the world of visible experience, to read God's nature in His works: thus, Mediæval philosophy was fundamentally a theology. But with the Renaissance shift of focus with regard to man,—now no more thought of as a mere property of God's self-exhibition (gist of Aquinas and Dante, whom Calvin follows), but himself a fashioner, whose labor in some sense is grateful to God,—with this there comes quickly up the necessity for another appraisal of the divine being; God must be seen from the point of view of man's judgement, and his existence and nature must be justified to man; thus, theodicy replaces theology. And the task falls to the philosophers; the greater part of the clerics follow the older tradition; and thus, for the first time since the passing of the Greeks, speculation regarding things ultimate becomes a lay prerogative. Modern Philosophy is *not* of the Church.

*the ontological argument*

First, God's existence. It would be unfair to Pascal to say that the 'Necessity of the Wager' is more than a studied concession to the spirit of rationalism, then rising with a surge; but it is wholly fair to stipulate that his projected 'Apology for the Christian Faith' of which the *Pensées* are the fragmentary preformations, is no less than a great and noble ontological argument, erected from the reasons of the heart. In this it is precisely the complement to Descartes' *Méditations,* ontological from the

*Descartes*

mind's reasons,—with, for Pascal, the added glory of a more moving interest and a fresher inspiration. Descartes, sincere enough, is yet only in passing theologically-minded; his argument is a gesture of honorable acquiescence—your gentleman's word!—but his vivid concern was far more with the gifts of the natural light. After their fashions both were repeating the one valid appeal to reason which arguments for the being of God or gods have discovered. In substance this appeal is as ancient as metaphysics; it is present in Plato (where the perfection of the Idea of the Good is God); it is formulated by Aristotle (in the argument that there must be an Actual which fulfills all potentiality); the Stoics made it both grandly and epigrammatically theirs ('if altars, then gods'); Tertullian was but an earlier Pascal with an argument which erects faith into a superior reason (*Credo quia absurdum*); and Augustine and Anselm give only the more astute and the more naïve versions of the one conviction that the image of divinity in men's minds must come from some understanding that is more structurally natural than is the natural reason itself. Yes, and the later philosophies, post-Cartesian, where God's being is their concern, play back to the same theme: Spinoza and Leibniz; Malebranche with his Vision, Berkeley with his creation-sustaining Idea; the Kantian and Hegelian traditions with their adumbrations of an Absolute which is the compensation of all temporalities and particularities; William

*Plato*

*Aristotle*

*Chrysippus*

*the post-Cartesians*

James with his 'kernels of Truth' and a Will-to-believe that is more valiant than reason and more aggressive than faith, and by its unconquerable grit breaks through into apocalypse,—all of these are but variants of this same stubborn reason, recurrent with the tides of time, by which men seek to convey to one another a something that is as seated as the world is in their sense of realities. Brutally, we put it, a man cannot lift himself by his own bootstraps, —and when, strangely, we do find man uplifted into another presence, we ascribe this to another than his power, and we call it the finding of God. *the Will-to-believe*

Yet always, in arguments for God's existence, there is something forensic, wordy. He who delivers the argument rarely seems to need it for his own better conviction, and he who receives it is uncertain, from it alone, as of what he is convinced. But the seventeenth century fell upon another and a more urgent problem of God's nature, where argument genuinely counted. *Man* was now in the eye, man and his case, his good and his evil. The purpose of the most magnificent of Protestant poems (and no poem is more high-minded or sublime) is to *justify* the ways of God *to man,*—in itself such a daring as only heresy could adventure! God, before the bar of man's judgement .... this was Time's great reversal, denying all the cathedral tympani, and reducing monk's devils to gargoyles.... Leibniz gave to the thing a name, and thenceforth, theology gave place to theodicy. Leibniz' own argument *theodicy* *'Paradise Lost'* *Leibniz*

*"the best possible of worlds"*

is directed to prove that this world, stellar and human, could not be bettered; the Creator has done his utmost. True, creation is an house for evil; but only the blackness of sin can measure the whiteness of sainthood, and who would live in the indiscriminate grays? .... Augustine had said much the same thing—the darks of the picture must exist if the lights are to shine; but again, Augustine was thinking of God's seeing, Leibniz of man's.... Many worlds are possible, but this is assuredly the *best* of them; so justified is God!.... Leibniz writes with a clear, yes, with even a sparkling conscience; but we, reading, must perforce feel the presence of the velvets and laces of the cuff that encircles the pen-hand.... Spinoza's philosophy is hardly apologetics (of which he, being neither Christian nor Jew, could feel little need), though the drive that lies back of his metaphysical gospel of emancipation is still the sorry case of man,—so that he writes an *Ethica*. Everywhere man is in bonds and everywhere he dreams of freedom. This is the starting-point for the most nobly elegiac of thinkers. His redemption is 'the Ladder', from bondage to freedom: externally it is a dialectic as hard as the Platonic, from step to step all steel, and for the climber a renunciation as profound as any asceticism of self-surrender; but internally (for this God-drunken man) it is a love as cleansed of all but light as may be interstellar spaces, and as blinding as should be a galaxy in holocaust. Love turned

*Spinoza*

towards the Eternal and the Infinite nourishes the mind with pure joy and frees it from all sadness. .... Ah, sadness! Wistful yet unregretting, it is in both the portraits and the words of Spinoza, so that his book seems always near to tears, which the high spirit is too brave to shed....

"Exaucez ma prière, apres que vous l'aurez formée en moi,"—it is Malebranche speaking at the very end of the Cartesian century. Malebranche, like Bishop Berkeley, is the serene and devout, not the sin-convicted Christian. Sunshine is returning, inner and outer. Faith and reason are one revelation; all reality is Vision in God. Malebranche, an Oratorian Catholic, and Berkeley, the most angel-minded of philosophers of every faith, unite in their stress on this idea of Vision as Nature's revelation of God.... "His magnificence shines in all his works! Wherever one casts his eyes in the universe he beholds a profusion of prodigies.... The astronomers who measure the greatness of the planets or who would find the number of the stars are the more filled with wonder as they learn more. .... How great is God in the heavens! how lofty in their depths! how magnificent in their light! how wise, how powerful in their law-ordained movements!".... In such an exaltation had sung the Heretic King, buoyant in the Glory of the Sun's Disk, three millennia before the day of Malebranche, —whose following generation, satisfied, was to enlarge the Argument from Plan with a more materis-

*Epictetus, II. 16: 42, says essentially this; Malebranche and Berkeley, curiously misunderstood one another*

*"Pleni sunt cæli et terra majestatis gloriæ tuæ!"*

*Ikhnaton*

tic understanding; while for debateful years Science and Religion were to fight it through, each combatant in the blindness of its own preconceits.... God cannot be justified in the outward parable, not to men nor to angels; understanding of the divine is in another than Nature's figure or dimension.

**Humanitarianism**

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY saw two further debouchments of the humanistic movement. For the first time naturalism consciously formulated itself as Science, having for task a complete description of the world, irrespective of, when not indifferent to religion. In like pace humanitarianism instructed men in self-confidence, teaching their powers of shaping and guiding their own destinies apart from any reliance upon Providence. These two constitute the 'Enlightenment' which is the 'Age of Reason'.

*deism*

Theologically they gave birth to deism—a farewell gesture to Divinity. God exists, but merely as a First Cause,—and this not even with the dignity of an Aristotelian Prime Mover, who sustains the Cosmos because of his perpetual presence. For to the deist the Creator is simply an amused inventor of a mechanical toy; the world is contrived, lubricated, set going, and seen to be good, engines humming, and the Designer concerns himself with it no more,—quite to the relief of passengers and crew,

who find themselves getting along well enough as enginemen.... If there be any more serious aspect to deism, it is either as a reverberation of theistic feeling; or as the more terrible conception of a Contriver whose Machine has monstrously escaped his hand, a half-fleshed Universe running amuck in the presence of its hapless God.

*Voltaire, a state of mind*

But one cannot speak of deism without facing the grimacing Voltaire, a man who was not a man but a state of mind. *God is* (though this is of little importance), and *miracles and providences are not* (and this is of great importance),—there is no more than this to Voltaire's philosophy. But it may well be doubted if any philosophy ever seized more convincingly upon great numbers of minds; today it is the wordy creed of comfortable multitudes. Voltaire himself loved comfort, for himself and for others; he was pained by any presence of suffering (perhaps not by its dramatic presentation, for he could picture horror), and he detested cruelty; for witting lies and all sorts of hypocrisy, but especially those of the Church, he could have no response but venom—or his own half-mad apology, that hearts go wrong because heads are out of kilter.... Ah, if men only could be true to their natural selves! if only they had sense enough to be good!.... This is Voltaire's uneased regret.... The world might so readily be sane and gentle! life so accommodatingly be pleasant! men good folks all!.... The bit-

*Voltaire's irony is his greatest tragedy*

terest irony of Voltaire is that the mischief of fools compelled a kindly man to employ irony. . . . As for science, Voltaire relished it for its polemic gifts; natural knowledge for its own sake was to him as meaningless as actually it is (a filling for puzzle-play hours); and as for the Bible, he attacked it because it was the weapon of antagonists who seemed to set store by it. Essentially, Voltaire was greatly, even if distortedly a Christian; he was possible only in a Christian world; and his deepest conviction, like the deepest conviction of Jesus, was faith in human goodness, needing only enlightenment to be made manifest in lives.

For half not only of its time but of its substance Voltaire *is* the Eighteenth century, bringing, in its season, wit as the supplement, and better supplement of the heart,—although, unaware to himself, it is always the heart that moves his own fleet wit.

*wit and 'l'Encyclopédie'*

Fissioned from Voltaire this wit might move into Encyclopedism, into ponderables and ponderosities and fine oracles, with a Laplace at the end picturing a Universe too crowded to yield to God even standing-room;—something similar though reverse, happens after Kant, when for the Absolutists a self-dissolvent One vastly crowds out Nature;—but whether it be Voltaire or Kant, in each case the vitality of the doctrine begins with a vital man; and the fissioned-off philosophy swings out into orotund magniloquence, transcendental now of the sense-world, now of the spiritual.

*Rousseau, theologian of the will*

Of Voltaire's century the other half is a doctrine of the will. Rousseau is nowadays almost sanctimoniously accepted as the Apostle of the Heart (as if Pascal had not lived!), but actually he is the theologian of the will. There are striking analogies between Rousseau's vision of political salvation and certain Christian doctrines of redemption, so that with but a transposition of terms the one might outline the other. Man is born, says Rousseau, anarchic and passionate, and free in his own violence; by an act of abnegation which is itself an act of free will, he surrenders his individual freedom and his anarchic self in order to become a member of the congregation of humanity, having its own 'common self' and its own 'general will'; this is the conversion, and from it the citizen emerges into a cleaner life, where, "his faculties developed, his ideas broadened, his whole soul elevated . . . . he ought to bless without ceasing the happy moment which had seized upon him once for all and, from a stupid and limited animal had made of him an intelligent being and a man"; for a man is truly a man only after having become a citizen of the world of humanity; there, in the silence of his petty and personal passions, for law's sake surrendered, he finds his true emancipation in such an act of will as can condemn his own trespasses of the Law, itself the great registration of that more universal will into which his private self has been absorbed. . . . Each phrase

*'Discours sur l'Inégalité' and 'Contrat social'*

here is paraphrase from Rousseau's own words, and step for step it follows the pattern of the evangelical salvation. There is needed only the *Vox populi, vox Dei* to give creed to the religion .... this, and the exaltation of the glory of a new Zion,—which Rousseau himself beholds, as in revelation: "It is a grand and beautiful spectacle to see man issue, as it were, from naught by his own proper efforts, dissipate by the light of his reason the shadows in which nature has enveloped him, elevate himself above himself, mount in the ardor of his spirit even to celestial regions, traverse, with a giant's pace like unto the sun, the vast expanse of the universe, and finally,—what is yet greater and more difficult,—enter within himself in order there to study man, to know his nature, his duties, and his end!" .... Rousseau was born in Geneva, and the echoes of Calvin are in his phrases.

*humanitarianism, even in its infidelity, is Christian*

Perfectibility and sympathy are the two redeeming graces of the natural man: this is the image of the Primal Adam for the new religion of the Humanitarians. It has brought Christian idealism down from skies which are no longer habitable save by stars and spaces: it has visioned salvation in the moving destinies of temporal mankind; but except in the eyes of a Church it has not been heretical. Precisely on its practical side it is most of all Christian, Christian in its pervasive sympathies, in its simple faiths in men and works. To be sure, its utterances tend to assume a kind of Roman legalism

in their forms; *law* is very sacred; and Rousseau's "Achieve thy good with the least possible ill to others," is of the kindred of Ulpian's "Justice is a constant and perpetual will to render unto each his due," or yet to Kant's more selfless abstraction, "So act that you can will the form of your act to become Law." All three express a doctrine of will, and of free will .... and all three are but lesser variants of the Golden Rule. *moral imperatives*

THE PROTESTANT EVANGEL parallels line for line the political. The natural man is the sinner; the humane man is the Christian; the transition from the one state to the other is a purging away of passions and the emerging of a purified will; the reward is adoption into an assembly whose citizens are the saints, and whose experienced life is a felt emancipation and glorification.... The whole movement is social and democratic; Protestant hymns are intense with congregationalism, with *aggregationalism,*—for numbers count heavily and give mass to faith; and Protestant simplifications are all directed toward facilitating sociality; the priest ceasing to be priest, descends from the altar and walks in the aisle; and indeed the altar ceases to exist,—a rostrum and a penitents' bench replace it; and, as in politics, excitement becomes a virtue. As far as it can, evangelism removes all rite of initiation from religion, and all **Evangelism**

privilege of inner withdrawal; in spirit it is journalistically public; its revivals are campaigns; its elections are shouting; and it tends to periodicities, whether of sabbaths or of exaltations. The Protestant world has been accused of divorcing religion from life; but the fact is, on the evangelical side at least, its secular hours are necessary reposes from religious intensities,—just as political quiets are necessary in democratic states; in neither case, does the lapse mean indifference.

*the movement is, of course, not confined to Protestant communions, nor is it co-equal with them; it is a movement 'within' Churches, not 'by' them*

The Evangelical movement appears to be the most colossally mind-made-up philanthropy in human history, an idealism that could only have been fed within a civilization which had somehow found its faith in man-value tremendously convincing—man-value both as to head-count and as to human quality. Human beings had been chattels in the ancient world, or sacrifices, with nothing thought of it, save the utility of manufacture or god-bargaining; and in the Mediæval polities, temporal and spiritual, men had been classed and assorted for the sake of glories temporal or spiritual, with no other homily for their comfort than of contentment with their assignments. But the evangelistic enthusiasms were all for transformations: for eliminating poverty; for assuaging affliction; for freeing slaves; for elevating the lowly; and most of all for a vast and romantic expansion of the Christian salvation to *all,* in whatever land, whose living ears might hear. The heathen might not be able to change their skins, but they

could at least hide them under Christian cottons, and their hearts could be made white!

*spiritual and economic missions*

Protestant missions were belated as compared with the Catholic, but they were in no sense secondary in zeal, and had vastly more the determination to transform body along with soul. If their end became confused with the ends of commercial enterprise, this was never any impairment of their inner zeal, nor of their honesty of spiritual purpose; it was the inevitable consequence of a great drift of mind, for which regeneration should lie in conformities and the glory of salvation in the volume of its chanting echoes. Back of it all lay a love of man, no longer for his diviner Pattern, but directly and explicitly for his timed embodiments. It was the greatest extravagance that Christianity had ever dreamed, and it has been huge in its transforming results, even if perhaps huger in its failures. For in the end, the Evangel has failed, whether it be as mission to foreign lands or as the congregation of a people; in both expressions it has been caught up into the complex of the politics and economics it would refashion and has lost spiritual understanding in its quest of many-mouthed expression. Christian truth cannot be a mass-phenomenon.

*evangelical failures*

. . . . Failure, certainly, is a hard word; and it cannot be said to apply in any total sense to a movement that has sustained states and has reformed social ills, and has instilled intense faiths, and has given comforts, pathetic or redemptive, to multi-

tudes of lives. The Evangel has conducted a tremendous campaign, heroic, as in an earlier day had been that of the Church .... both succeeded and both fell short .... for in life there is a Something impregnable....

*the Road to Glory*

But it would be a mistake to say that in the gospel of the Evangel there is not also something discovered that strikes into the fibres of spiritual experience. A glorified neighborliness, nor yet a systematized philanthropy, cannot of themselves create religious enthusiasm; and if we see in the evangelical movement no more than a sentiment added to the humanitarianism of political philosophers, we have missed the light at its core. 'Glory' is a word that recurs abundantly in its utterance, written and vocal, and is meant to designate a quality which is neither sanctification nor spectacle, but is more related to emancipation; it is the exuberance of release, the unconfinable joy of the saved soul. The only discipline that Evangelism knows is the discipline of the Road to Glory, from Cross to Crown.

*the Preacher*

Most instructive is the fact that the expressions of this gospel and the chief agencies of the disciplinary path are intensities of speech, in preaching and in hymn. The cleric, who may be priest or pastor in a more ritual religion, is here first of all a preacher, with an art of enchantment which is of the voice, freeing with utterance the surcharged heart; it is the Gift of Tongues, which at its best stimulates irresistible visions of the unseen, and in

its unhappier provocations blurs away into nonsense. Naturally the thing does not brook criticism from believers, but this need not mean that it has not created in the sermons a spiritual literature within which the good and beautiful is at least not less frequent than are similar qualities in an equal mass of fiction or of political debate. The human mind clogs readily with the wastes of its own progressions.

*moods of the House of God*

A similar judgement may be passed upon Evangelical hymnology. As poetry the mass of it is as weak as is the mass of poetry, and as music it may be only by a remove better; but here again, with the selective power which is time's, there emerge a body poetic and a body musical which are glowing with vitality. Indeed, along with preaching the one art of Protestantism is its music of hymns, and these represent a poetry having a strong affinity to the other lyric poetries of modern times, concerned to express intensely simple and direct moods. Chiefly they are congregational, the moods of the House of God; but they may be as private as is any mood of the heart that is subject to disclosure. It is due to this flexibility that the hymn, most of all, is made the evangelical Herald of the Way; and the whole life of the Christian is portrayed in its modal moments. Indeed, what the Mass is to the ritual Church, this for Evangelism is its Hymnal; and as in the liturgy is symbolized man's whole *Progressus Vitæ,* so in the hymned devotions the pilgrimage of

*again, in 'Pilgrim's Progress'*

the soul, following the Path of Glory, is made into a music. Were one but to take, say, the Methodist Hymnal, and from it select a group of the numbers that have won their way into the conscious lives of multitudes, it will be found that a whole leash of devotional moods is there gathered, from which the cycle of redemption may be repeatedly composed as simple song-sequence,—testimony enough of the universality of the experience. "O for a thousand tongues to sing," this is No. 1, voicing the congregationalism which is the first impulse of evangelical faith. "Hark, the herald angels sing" is a carol that carries already something more than its choric joy, an anticipation of the sense of individual glow and passionate longing which is the burden of many another hymn,—of "Jesus, Lover of my soul," "All hail the power," of "Thou who like the wind dost come." There are hymns of trust,—"Abide with me," "God is my strong salvation," Whittier's "I know not where His islands lift"; hymns of aspiration,—"Nearer my God to thee," "See, how great a flame aspires"; hymns of consolation,—"In heavenly love abiding," and the very beautiful anonymous "Come unto me, when shadows darkly gather"; and again there are hymns that sweep in with a certain grandeur of phrase,—"There's a wideness in God's mercy," Cowper's "God moves in a mysterious way," Isaac Watts' "O God, our help in ages past," Charles Wesley's "Lord of the wide, extensive main"; while not infrequently something is seized

*Methodist hymns*

from the Middle Ages and given a flowing melody which lifts it beyond its years, as in the fine exaltation of "Jerusalem the golden," after Bernard of Cluny. It is idle to speak for these hymns—varying in their level of both poetic and musical accomplishment, but never without some rapture of mood—to those who can discover no toleration, even imaginative, for the spirit which moves them; but that this spirit is deeply sincere in both its pathos and its elevation, that its fervencies are never mean and are often noble, and that the expression has brought healing to much human pain and relief from much plain blackness of heart, of this there can be no denial. Less must be said for many tempers of art that are praised more.

*religion of the heart*

In the end, the evangelist spirit does create a mode of experience which is quite its own. In its own way it makes life over, and the refashionings lie in directions which move intimately near to those of the more general democratic movement. Only, whereas democracy in the Modern World stands purposeless and futile in the very hour of its apparent victory, having no sense of bearing or meaning, the religious zeal of the Evangel falls upon a compensation which is more than social or congregational; as polity it surely fails, but as a fulfillment of lives it succeeds. Nor is it a religion of the weak and unprosperous; it demands of its communicants a sensibility which is not of the senses, but implies generosity of mind and a vivid energy; and these qualities, also, it has

shown, in works. In some degree it is a realization of Pascal's 'reason of the heart', or again of St. Paul's love triumphant,—in either case a 'glory'. Its defect is obviously a certain ephemeralness—swift glows and speedy fadings; as a faith it is in need of stays and inner supports; and these it has more or less securely found in the complementary, and not hostile, spirit of Puritanism.

**Puritanism**

PURITANISM is a morale and also an ideal. Historically it expresses itself first in England, where it comes as the truer Reformation; but as a character it is not confined to British nor to Colonial coasts. In its essence it is a structural steel, first building up and later imbedded in societies; and it is most form-giving in those societies which have most discovered that freedom is a responsibility. It has little in common with Evangelism, although historically it may appear somewhat as the stern elder of this latter, for it abjures enthusiasms and intoxications and it is rigidly self-respecting in the domain of intelligence. But neither is it, as the cartoons love to proclaim, a form of Protestant asceticism in the hands of monkish and inquisitorial priests; Puritanism owns a discipline, but it is not a discipline of penance or of self-mutilation. What Puritanism is, at the core of it, is an ideal of *the clean life,* which must at all costs be human. The animalities of the natural man are

*cleanliness*

put under control along with the asceticisms of the fanatic man; and the virtues are defined for the sake of being enforced. That this enforcement must be self-enforcement if virtue is to be virtue, this also is of the Puritan's faith, assented to by his understanding and sustained by his will. Duty and conscience march together in the Puritan soul, and each without concession; hence it comes that the peak of its disciplines, military in their callings-to-account, is a self-renunciation which is Roman in sternness, and often enough pathetic in the drafts which it makes upon our less immune sensibilities,—such a pathos as is in Milton's superb lines to his blindness or in Cotton Mather's touching resignation beside the bedside of his dying wife. Never, however, is it a purposeless discipline, nor an irrational; it is the expression of a state of mind for which life is under appraisement, and for which life's possible attainments are gauged as higher and lower; and the Puritan, as he sees it, makes of the higher his aim. There are many philosophies of life which have perceived patterns of nobility as open to human nature; there are few indeed that have converted this insight into a resolve to make of the nobler their reality. The ancient Stoics did this, and the modern Puritans.

*duty and conscience*

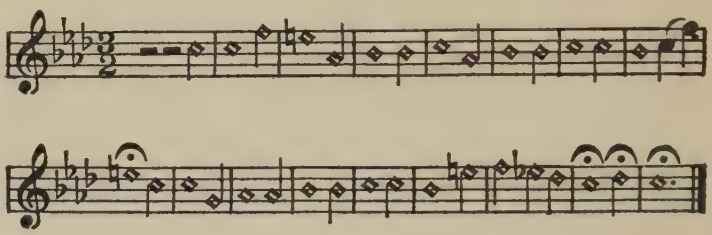
*cf. Wm. James, 'Varieties of Religious Experience,' p. 303*

As in every creed that rests its demands upon will and the sense of duty, there is in Puritanism something of the military; its spirit thrives, one may say, in an atmosphere of peril and endeavor, and

*God-fearing more than Christ-loving*

even for the trying presence of sin and the devil it derives its own grim consolations. The attitude is strained, even in its discipline, and it lingers ever near to the grotesque, being God-fearing rather than Christ-loving, and glumly exuberant over its own painted damnations—

There guilty hosts of Adam's race
Shriek out, and howl beneath thy rod;
Once they could scorn a Savior's grace,
But they incensed a dreadful God!



*the melody, masculine, firm, is more the essence than are the words. (Knowlton, 'Songs of Other Days', Boston, 1922)*

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord," and the Puritan's *Amen* is a burst of praise.... It is on such things that the cartoonist flourishes; but they represent nothing more essential to the faith than are the gargoyles to the essence of the cathedral. What *is* essential is a theological honesty that is willing to face the facts of the world—the black with the white —without blench or flinch.... "He that can apprehend and consider vice (it is John Milton speaking) with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Chris-

*'Areopagitica'*

tian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd virtue, unexercis'd and unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." Here is the prime gospel of the Puritan, *to abstain because one has learned to distinguish,* and to will to be exercised and breathed in the race. If there be in its expressions something of the monastic, the spirit of it is at least brought forth from the monastery; it is a religion in the open, and published. . . . In Puritanism the Militia of God is returned, not as a company or as organization, but as an assembly of warriors, each self-disciplined. Cromwell and Lincoln are such men as the Puritan soul embodies, God-fearing and steadfast, even under laceration. . . . Conscience, and Duty. . . .

*Protestant incarnation*

PROTESTANTISM does indeed bring back into Christianity an embodiment, as the Puritan movement indicates; but this embodiment is not that of a picturable flesh, but of an action. The beat and thump of the march is in it, and the force of a mounting rhythm. Metaphysically, for all our modern thought, religious no less than other, the static worlds (Greek and Mediæval alike) are become as shattered shells on the strand; life has set forth on the great tides; never again can the physical world be the enclosed *thing* that it was before

Copernicus; and never again can the world of the spirit, whether of man or God, be less than timed and historic and aspiring: the Progress of Life is the one body that Reality can own, the one Incarnation.

*meeting-houses*

In religion this truth is figured in part by the changed attitude toward edifices. At the beginning of the movement the churches are despoiled of their visible glories, whitewashed into garishness, or at best left plain and unvarnished. And when a better sense does find its way back into ecclesiastical architecture, it is to produce structures that are austere with simplicity; the Meeting House may be beautiful in line, but the polychromes are vanished.

*Protestant and Renaissance tombs*

Something analogous happens to the cemetery. It is still, for a time, "God's Acre"; but the need fades as it is more and more understood that no life, mortal or immortal, can be a *re*-embodiment; and the plat for the dead is made over into a memorial garden, marked only by bare stones and classical tombs. In the Catholic world the Renaissance still carries on something of the Mediæval feeling, though touched with a new and pagan pathos—as

*at St. Dénis*

in the cenotaph of Henri II and Catherine de Medici, itself a tear for the transiency of mortal loveliness, or in the horribly living corpse-in-stone

*d.* 1544. *at St. Pierre, Bar-le-Duc*

of René of Châlons (shown, as his will stipulated, as he should be when three years dead), with its tremendous gesture of offering his heart to God.

Protestantism had lost this concern; its truer cemeteries are in human memories, and its palls are flowers.

*marching-songs of the Faith*

Supremely it is its music that speaks its spiritual understandings. In the Evangelical hymns there may be some softness, but the broader Protestantism utters its worship in chanted psalms and in the great congregational hymns. Merely in the comparison of the Calvinistic *Doxology*—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow"—with the *Te Deum laudamus,* the distinction of the faiths stands clear. With the *Te Deum* there is opened the splendor of the Heavens, but it is a splendor that is all for vision, and the singer is upon his knees; but with the *Doxology* the congregation is uprisen, and the swing and tramp of armies, majestic down the avenues of the years, is in its rhythmic thunders. .... But most and most greatly, Protestant music is German, and here the North comes once more bringing its gift to the Faith. There is no organ so exalted as is Bach's, and there are no hymns so grandly moving as the German best: Luther first, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott"—a mountain-fortress of heroic faith; or again, "Die Himmel rühmen des Ewigen Ehre," mighty also with the genius of Beethoven; or the fine high praise of "Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren"; or the combined tenderness and strength of—

*German hymns*

Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe,
die sich in Jesu offenbart;
ich geb' mich hin dem freien Triebe,
mit dem ich Wurm geliebet ward.
Ich will anstatt an mich zu denken,
ins Meer der Liebe mich versenken . . .

Quietism

"UEBER allen Gipfeln ist Ruh. . . ." Goethe's eight-line lyric is the highest and simplest expression of a gift that all religions seek, whether they be faiths in Nature or in God. "How beauti-
*Isaiah* 3:7 ful upon the mountains are the feet of him that publisheth peace!" Such assuredly is the final ejaculation of all aching lives; and whether from a weariness of buffeted action, or from the world's incomprehensions, or from an unrest of the intellect nonplussed by its own self-multiplying problems, the final longing of man's heart is for peace. It may take the form of a Brahmin's withdrawal, or of a Buddhist's still and seated contemplation, or of a Stoic's imperial resignation, or yet of a Christian's inner quiet; but the thing sought is always a solitude which is self-consoling, a fastness which is also a vastness, with horizons effortlessly remote and quietudes consumingly near. It is no pause, no mere rest from activities, this peace; and it is no suppression, even when attained through relinquishment, and the long-fought pathways of abstention; rather, it is of itself vital and sustaining . . . . beyond

tears and laughters, but because it is the better wisdom of both.

*Quaker peace*

In 1643 George Fox, then only nineteen years old, at the command of an inner voice, saying, "Be a stranger unto all!"—left home and friends, and wandered forth seeking solitude. He turned from the churches, for "God who made the world did not dwell in temples made with hands"; and he turned from the official shepherds of men's souls, asking only the direct guidance of the inner spirit; dramatically, also, he turned from any textual reliance upon the Scriptures, and in 1649, in "the steeple city" of Nottingham he cried out against idolatry of the Bible,—and suffered therefor the first of many imprisonments. Thus was the Society of Friends, the Quakers, inspired,—to be hounded and persecuted, and to thrive under persecution; to become a sect, if not a church, and prolific in works; but most of all to become a mode of life, as new in its day as that of the followers of St. Francis in the thirteenth century, and not without a kinship with the Franciscans.

*inner light*

The Quaker movement is the last simplification of Protestantism. The panoply and sacraments of the Roman Church had been abandoned alike by Evangelist and Puritan—all save the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, held to have been instituted by the Saviour; but the Protestants not only clung to, they magnified, and as Fox held, made an idol of the Bible, last relic of ecclesiastical iconolatry. The

Quakers abjured these, discarding the outwardness of all sacraments, and asking even of the Word of God only an inner eloquence. The Word was for them a Spirit, and the Inner Light was all in all. Milton was a Puritan, but the essence of Quaker faith could not be better expressed in words than by his great verses,—

*'P.L.', bk. III, vv*: 51-55

Thou Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

This ideal was the natural and final fulfillment of Protestant thinking, and of the Protestant affirmation of the authority of the spirit's own testimony. In Evangelism it had taken the form of an intensified Love, bursting into an inward Glory; in Puritanism it was conscience speaking in the form of Duty—"stern daughter of the voice of God!" For the Quakers it became the third in a new trinity of Christian virtues,—unto love's glorification, and the still small voice of conscience commanding, adding the mute eloquence of the Divine Peace. Outwardly the Quakers refused, and still refuse, war; inwardly they sought, and, we may well believe, found in their quiets a something which it is beyond art to express or imagery to impart—an Illumination, which could be as great in Tranquillity as should have been the whiteness of Creation's first morning.

*testimony*

The Quaker Confession of Faith is never a rote; it is a last and personal thing, delivered from the individual soul as in a birth .... as Socrates dreamed that Truth should come .... itself the act of devotion. 'Testimony', the Friends style their utterances; and in them there is in fact testimony to the reality of a something human which has forced its way livingly into the contexts of our lives, and has become morticed into the structure of the world. Nor is it a light thing; but beautiful, upon the mountains....

*last testimony of James Naylor, Quaker saint; cf., Bridges, 'Spirit of Man', no. 372*

"There is a spirit, which I feel, that delights to do no evil nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations: As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other: If it be betrayed, it bears it; for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned, and it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being

forsaken: I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth; who through death obtained their resurrection and eternal holy life."

**Word and Spirit**

MODERN LITERATURES open their pages in virtual coincidence with the coming of the printing-press; and, whether secular or churchly, from no inspiration do they derive more, in the greatness of thought, than from the Bible, itself the most circulated of books. Out of this a whole color of mind had been created, and whatever else may enter into its complexion, it is certainly become *literate* in a sense which no preceding centuries have known. We may mark this as in part an enthrallment, such that the *word,* yet in its typographic impecunity, has come to be taken for the thought, and even for the substance of intelligence—a curious illusion, which has found its crude way into certain canting psychological teachings,—and it has been only with effort that better minds have kept them rid of this deceit. In the realm of religion it has been particularly pernicious, for the very liberty of access to the Bible which print made possible tended to erect its texts into a kind of tyranny, and made of them dogmas rather than thoughts. Protestantism grew up with The Book, until the Book itself became the stifling of religious truth—or was in the way of so becoming. But in the end (for which

*not in symbol but in life is found Spiritual truth*

the Quakers seem most to be thanked) there came the perception that The Word is itself not wordy, but must be lived before being symbolled. Perhaps the glamor of visioned print had already done this: it had thrown a screen of emblems more akin to mind than to physical being between the understanding and its sense-objects, and so for those who could detect that it was symbol had made more persuasive any doctrine of spiritual integrity;—but in all case, the event was, and is, that spiritual experience came in the end to mean something that needs neither the colorings of sense nor the measures of mathematics to put into it reality; and this, when it is beautiful, is the true Word, and the one Spirit that can be named Holy.... If praying be grateful to it, this is not through forms of speech, and its message is never more than remotely preached.

*time's exposition of the Trinity*

And yet, it has become the supreme reality of the newer Christendom (wherever this be Christian), and for Catholic and Protestant alike, for Pascal no less than for Milton. Indeed, gazing back through the revelations of history, one can fairly say that after the death of Jesus his personality manifested its first theophany as the *Christ* of the martyred church of Roman times; and its second as the monarchal *God the Father* of the great days of the Church; and its third as the Dove of the *Holy Spirit,* now first understood by them who could disclaim sense-formed images, and could clearly see to an Inner Light. Such seers, to be sure, there had been

in all times and churches, as also among pagans; but it was left for the period introduced by the Reformation to make of this inner salvation a Gospel. Thus, the history of Christendom has in a fashion itself been the exposition of the Mystery of the Trinity, each Divine Person in turn being revealed through the one foundational faith. . . . That this is not empty imagery, but a saying formal with the facts, let the expressions of art themselves indicate: the Good Shepherd, of the catacombs; the Majesty of God, of the cathedrals; the Unseen Presence, of modern devotionals;—and beyond these there lie for our examination Time's more detailed expansions of experience. . . .

*art gives testimony*

No doubt there has been complexification, and many wanderings. But truly, *can* we think that the floods of the World's energies are *all* diked? Nay, must we not rather say that the stream of life, meandering forth into temporal meadows, divides into brooks and rivulets, whereof some play out into ripples and are caught up into rainbows, and some may dankly find their way into sinks and cesspools, and some more livingly combine into strong tides, which at last find their Ocean?

## VII

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

MEN map their own fates with the milestones of their deeds. It is true that a whole school of physiographers reject any notion of the social as well as all of the individual responsibility of mankind, and make not only mind but man an epiphenomenon of phenomenal Nature; but this is certainly no more than a temporary infatuation of the Occidental intelligence; the sweep of experience will brush it aside. The Modern Period is as clearly charted by human appetite and calculation, by counsels and choices, as is any in time; and of such chartings all of men's recordings are as one testimony.

This Modern Period is peculiarly clear-cut. It opens with the discoveries of Columbus and Copernicus and it closes (for it has closed) with a new astrophysics and the completion of Earth's survey by Peary (North Pole, 1909) and Amundsen (South Pole, 1911). Socially it is the period of Europe's colonial and economic expansion, Europe challenging the Globe for world-supremacy and in the end failing; and in a military sense it lies between the Wars of Religion of the sixteenth century and the terrible *confiteor* of Christian Civilization in the huge war for economic advantage in

1914-1918. The long future will look back to the period as the briefly upflaring challenge of mankind by the men of Europe—like a black mutiny on a desperate lost ship, broken at the last by its own inner dissensions.

*Utrecht, Vienna, Versailles*

The period shears almost precisely into subdivisions of two centuries each, 1500-1700 and 1700-1900. The first of these, the Renaissance, fades into its rococo twilight and passes fussily with Louis XIV and his Age. After this European politics become seriously business-like, and uniforms and courts are understood to be for show; the real *game* is over the tables of chancellors and their diplomats. Politically the Modern Age lies with beautiful neatness between the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and that of Versailles in 1918. It is oddly symmetrical, too, to see the secondary climax within the period in 1814, marked by the Congress of Vienna. Each of these great episodes has had for purpose the remapping of the Globe in the interests of European nations.

Essentially the Modern Period is the age of nationalities. With its opening Europe is enlarged in effect by the forming of the Central and Eastern 'powers' (a new term for 'state'): Austria is made definite and local; Prussia marches into the open; and beyond, under its Peter, Russia emerges from its immemorial hibernation; Europe is no longer an Atlantic strip. Likewise, in the trans-Atlantic West and in the remoter zones of the Southern

Hemisphere, Europe is again enlarged—although it was to require the full period to bring this fact home to the minds of the parent nations; which, even less, could comprehend that expansions of the European horizon must mean also transformation of thought and of fate for the European peoples. In our day this is being understood, slowly.

*no one has, with detail, shown the influence of the discovery of American Indians in developing doctrines of the Rights of Man, and so furthering the Revolutions*

Also, in respects other than the political the Modern Period is curiously self-contained and completed. Feudalism recedes into almost total incomprehension; it is replaced by the aggressive rise of the business mind of an economic bourgeoisie, which fits itself enthusiastically into the frame of nationalism,—and at the end finds itself frightened and shrinking before the spectres which its own zeals have evoked. The time has likewise spurred human ingenuity to undreamed-of inventions, climacteric in the conquest by the genius and valor of man of the last of the primitive elements, the air; so that it is small wonder that in the lust of his discoveries of the tools of enterprise Western Man should have made of their efficiencies a worshipful cult, idolizing his Science,—only, at the end, once more to be terrified by his own magicianship, and to fret in the dread of his own death-dealing devices. For the most fatal of all the strains which Modernity has imposed upon mankind has been that which has abortively abandoned his moral life into the custody of impulses gigantesque both in their control of agencies which might satisfy them and of their own im-

*fascisms, bolshevisms, Ghandisms, dragons in China*

*from Newton to Einstein is another cycle—newer dubieties terminating elder dogmatisms*

mature disproportions. The Modern Time has indeed been obsessed with its sense of this disproportion; and with all its bombast and self-laudation, it has secretly and repeatedly given closet-worship to some better Wisdom than any it can discover within itself,—ruinously, often enough, for its understandings are frail.

*to Classic, Eclectic, Theosophic, muddily Biologic mysteries, —and to mere Sense-being*

**The Idols of Modernity**

LAST echo of the religious wars, in 1695 came the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Thenceforth, as to religion European Christendom falls into three parts, Greek, Roman, and Protestant, conforming with a fair equilocation to the Slavic, Latin, and Teutonic linguistic groupings of the peoples. Each of these ecclesial realms pursued its own developments of the faith, with some antagonisms and some *rapprochements,* but with little oversteppings of boundaries; and each made additions, shining or vague, to the total significance of Christianity. But one fact outstands over all: *all* the Churches became definitely subordinated to the new-come Nationalism of the European peoples; whether as state-churches or as tolerated congregations, the position of religious organization became definitely subordinated to political, and this not only in the formal understandings of laws but also in the conscience and consciousness of citizens. The accompaniment has been a progressive reduction of meaning for all the *ecclesiæ,* and a radical and con-

*the Eastern addition is made by the beautiful primitivism of such as Tolstoy and Dostoievsky, —and by Slavic church music*

*"Oui! je suis catholique! mais aussi*

tinuous falling away of their influence on the direction of affairs both political and cultural; statesmen have used the churches, scholars and scientists have done their manners in ecclesiastical presences, and business (save the mark!) has *supported* the edifice which was presumably erected upon the rock of faith: meantime, in the temples themselves, the national colors stand before the altar of God, equipaced with the banner of the Church .... and this custom is with no distinction of confession, mutely attesting Christendom's subordination of the spiritual to the police power. In France and Russia, in the hour of their Revolutions, such attitude brought its own swift retribution. The churches surrendered,—a last capitulation the new treaty (1929) of Vatican and Capitol; in the See of Peter the broad internationalism which once made the Roman Church the living symbol of Christian society has given way to political wariness. But Protestantism, haplessly, has been little less servile.

*je suis français!"—the man had suffered from both parties, and had sought, dividedly, to be true to both....* 1906

*nothing of Paris is more meditatively curious than the Latin-lettered* LIBERTÉ-ÉGALITÉ-FRATERNITÉ *on Gothic churches*

In Nationalism a new idolatry has been enseated in the European world, rendering lip-service and life-service to the *Idol of the State*. "Men are no more church-minded, indeed, in wide circle they are without true religious feeling; but, without knowing it, they feel the need of an equivalent, and even now they have set new gods upon the throne, which are named Roma or Germania or Britannia or Gallia,—though none notices the deep blasphemy that therein lies." Driesch is here designating a re-

*Idol of the State*

*Hans Driesch, 'Die sittliche Tat'* (*p.* 155). 1927

vived paganism, come with a Christian mask to distract and divide, and to uplift its local cults. A world of cartoons is its eloquent commentator, counterpoint to the litanies and the processions, the temples and the memorials that glorify patriotisms and sanctify native soils. It is not that in themselves these may not be splendidly expressive of causes worth living for, and for giving up life, as the battle-slain have answered; but that, as simple fact, this religion of states has for many a soul left way for none other.

*Idol of Civilization*

A wider angle of vision—though the image worshipped is essentially of the same kind—has lifted the devotion from a narrowly national cult to an adoration of the *Idol of Civilization,* to which is attached the epithet 'Christian'. For long this was primarily the social order and achievement of the Protestant and Catholic peoples of Western Europe, having for tokens its willingness to view church and state alike as ecclesiastical realities, its clean conviction of the superiority to other men of the European Caucasians, coupled with readiness to assume the burdens accruing to absence of color, and genuinely no doubt, to a very grateful belief that God had not granted obvious gifts without design: the parable of the talents meant much. The last word of eighteenth-century apologetics is in the interests of this Idol. Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* had for its object to demonstrate that "of all the religions that have ever existed, the

*anno 1802, introd.*

Christian is the most poetic, the most human, the most favorable to liberty, to the arts, and to letters" .... It is an odd but significant introversion that would make of Christianity a nurse of expression rather than itself a truth expressed; and it is also significant that the eighteenth-century effort to justify God through his works has now passed on to a similar defense of the whole Christian faith. Religion is no longer a last illumination opened to the pilgrim soul; its office is merely to trim the lamps of the Altar of Civilization.

*Idol of Humanity*

There is one more advance of this idolatry. Eighteenth-century humanitarians had glorified as no past had glorified the dream of a Terrestrial Paradise. *Man,* not as made divine, not as idealized in form, but as he should yet be actualized here on Earth, this Man was made over into an idol and a deity. The *Idol of Humanity* won its most towering adorations in the period of the Revolutions; it gained unction and thick sentiment through the nineteenth-century teachers of evolution, what with their prides and their prophecies for the human form; and it won exquisite comforts from every phase of a vast material conquest (as it seemed) by man of the shell that housed him. Actually, however, the end is not wholly comforting. For to some it would appear that this cult surely had passed from a better to a worse understanding of human nature. The goddess of the Revolution was Reason, which however chance-faced was her eighteenth-century image, at

*from a Cult of Man to a Cult of Sense*

the least represented man's better dignity. But neither the Romantics, who exalted fantasy, nor the Realists, who descended into the flows of sense, were willing to remember the parent image. At the close of a century the cult has passed through many transformations. The laudation of Reason had looked rather finely toward the coming of a world of men rejoiced to order their affairs in the calms of dispassion; the Romantics dreamed roundly of Utopias; the Realists were at least convinced that an honest Work lies under the hand in a material world. But is the last gospel in the cult of Man in aught uplifted above a fleshly adulation of the body and its organs? as if the human ephemerid, in his one preening hour, glassed the sum of God's genius! And so, now, where we had thought to have entered the cella of some Zeus-sprung Athena we find ourselves grovelling before the Pandemian Aphrodite—a bit the worse for much use.

So is the house of God filled. New Idols, new feastings....

*idolatrous morals*

THE IDOLS of the State, of Civilization, and of Humanity, in their exposition have two traits in common. First, they are all terrestrial in their outlooks, seeing or foreseeing their moments of exaltation in some condition of man's physical well-being: for the State, which exalts patriotism as its supreme virtue, and for Civilization, expressing

its credo as some illuminated cosmopolitanism, the sought moment is the possible duration (temporary perforce, be it centuries or millennia) of the idealized society which should give it body and cult-service; for Humanity the sought moment is any hour that might be clasped between the lids of birth and death in which reason or fantasy or some delirium of sense might mount to its glory,—laughter is sudden glory, quoth Hobbes, with a political wisdom outrivaling all *Leviathan*. Terrestriality and temporality, these, then, combine into the first trait. The second is simply that each of the Idols does imply a doctrine of morals, and of moral values: whatever in the goddess is worshipped (for the deities are oddly feminized) is yet valued in terms of men's experience of their Earth, and is given its eminence on the ground that it is good; and this puts morals into the debate.

*Idol of Science*

But there is a fourth Idol which is greater than any that are yet named, and is indeed king in the pantheon, whose distinction in cult is that he is indifferent to all moral value and makes thereof only mirage. This is the *Idol of Science,* the most august and the most compellingly served of all the deities that have rebelliously arisen for the overthrow of Christendom. The first and the last avowals of the servitor in the temple of Science is of the indifference of fact and of the impersonality of truth; this indifference is as to any human good, and this impersonality is as touching any human

*this is, of course, a moral code —narrowed to the one appetite of curiosity*

aspiration; it is the affair of science merely to portray, never to guide; morals, and any moral God, are but chimæra.... Now it is true enough that this is but the esoteric worship. The world is given to believe that science is essentially guidance, and that, as to morals, there is at least no disregard of morality, for this, too, is the subject of scientific study. Exactly so. Science (that is, knowledge) must guide conduct, if guidance there is to be, and morals examined is morals fortified. But this is no more than any quest for understanding; it has small affair with the Idol, which in thousands of minds has totally replaced all other deity. And of this Idol we can first and most say that its great commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other God before me," and that its oracle is transcribed from the ancient shrine of the goddess of Nature, "I am that I am, and no man hath lifted my veil,"—in other words that whatever we choose to call science is thereby made high custodian of truth. This would be all well enough were we not limited to one method (known as scientific procedure) and to one object (known as Nature), and required therein to envisage the deity; for it is this object, Nature so conceived, that has in fact become the Idol, a god jealous of prerogative and pitiless in exaction.... Today there are thousands of conscientious gentlemen who are communicant Christians and able scientists, and who are ready with pen and proclamation to assert that their two faiths are not only humanly sociable

*contemporary philosophers, numbers of whom are unavowedly atheists, see better than the professional scientists what the cult implies*

but are also mentally compatible. In this, however, they speak as scientists and not for Science, which radically is atheistic, unless we can call its own Physis more than an Idol.

But *is* Truth, not merely the naked, but the unfleshed Thing which physical science would make Lord over All? Are deeps of space and comminutions of atoms reality's last exposition, with some Unmoved Mover for its ultimate self-contradiction? Aristotle attained to this understanding, now better than two millennia gone,—have we made no advance since? and is none possible? .... Or could it be that Plato spake with a surer voice when he proclaimed the Good to be the summit of thought, with truth and beauty and measure for its attributes, and said of it that indwelling is God? .... Every Greek understood—and better than most Moderns—that a dance of atoms can only be a chaos of the insensate .... or, as *we* may see, a *danse macabre* of the skeletons of thought.... There! at the core of our 'Nature', *it* sits throned,—it, which we, its devotees, fatuously lustful of our own delirium, picture as the fecund opulence of a Great Mother; but at the last lifting our eyes, we gaze and the delusion of her shudders away like a transforming dream, and we see *its* fact: its body, bones; its skull, grinning; its crown, iron; its pillow, the Night of the Abyss. There is no glow; even Hell is fallen into dead ash. .... In upper Mixteca there is a cave which the Indians of pre-Columbian times deemed to be the

*Henri Poincaré shines as exception among modern minds*

entrance to the Abode of Felicity, and it is said that men who were weary of the world's strivings and women who were deep-grieved for beloved ones who had vanished into death, could they but bring the great price which was demanded by the priests who guarded the Door of the Divine Ones, were admitted thither, to be seen no more among men. But what they found was the black maw of Tlatecutli, Toad-of-the-Gaping-Jaws, and for their last bedfellow Tzontemoc, He-of-the-Falling-Hair,—for the Spaniards, when they entered the cave, found there many a bone-heap, where the deluded wanderers had fallen, in the blackness....

**Gog and Magog**

CHURCHMEN of the mid-nineteenth century undertook to defend the Christian faith against the inroads of the new Religion of Science. Availing themselves only of the weapons of their antagonists, they failed. It was a failure the more lamentable because, on the scientific side, such admirable presbyters as Huxley, in England, and such jesuitically shrewd minds as that of Renan, in France, were able to reverse the process with effect, and to attack the churches with sermon and exegesis. Those who sought to defend a literal Bible were speedily forced out of the intellectual court; expansions of both historic and scientific knowledge and the 'higher criticism' of the text itself readily

*T. R. Huxley, piously clerical; and Renan, le dernier mot de l'esprit fin....*

demonstrated that the two testaments represent but two collections of the literatures of an ancient people, each collection being drawn mainly from a narrowly circumscribed historical period; for equipped scholars the view that Biblical texts are themselves and beyond question revelations of truths was forever displaced; the Book on the lectern is simply a print on a reading-stand.... But what carried a deeper ruin than the fantastic attempts to redeem a superstition was the churchmen's surrender to the social idolatries, to the cults of polities and welfares. In place of maintaining man's moral independence and spiritual integrity, church with church adopted programs now nationalistic, now missionary and colonial, now philanthropic, all eventuating into a vague 'social service' which, in essence, is tendance upon human comfort, all well enough as incident but meaningless as religious principle; so that at the last, great numbers of church houses are no more than community clubs, on a plane with country clubs and people's playhouses. It is true that in them there is more of an effort than in some similar enterprises to purvey to the spiritual,—but it is this phrase itself which spells their damnation; purveyance is surrender of cause, and its replacement by businesslike interest. Many a man nowadays asks if the church is longer of more than a luxurious significance in Christian society: a beautification which may be finer than theatres and hotels, but is

*God's words*

*'social service'*

*Cathedral of Liverpool, a new Gothic masterpiece; St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew in New York; Richardson's romanesque Trinity in Boston; T. Kimball's St. Cecelia, Omaha; the lovely Hispanic St. John's, Los Angeles, —eclectic but beautiful, all*

after all primarily a place of concourse for congenially-minded men. It is true that church edifices are being erected in numbers; true, also, that many of them are of great beauty, amounting to a renaissance of the church-builder's art; but who is ready to say that this is more intrinsic of our time or spirit than the magnificence of our political monuments or the exotic displays of our palaces of pleasure? In the seventeenth century men sought to justify God by argument; in the eighteenth it was Christian civilization that was being justified through its arts and letters; today, the church itself is on the trial-stand, and it is offering for its apology the works of this world. As to this, there is little to choose among denominations (although, certainly, there is a vast choice in congregations and their leaders).... A last descent is the final in fatality. In taking over into itself such subjects as 'comparative religion' and 'psychology of religion', and making them curricular in its colleges, Christianity becomes but an epithet of science. Here religion definitely cedes all claim to an inner and self-fortified wisdom, or to a spiritually substantive organization of human experience; if we may employ Kantianisms, it surrenders both its categorical and its imperative characters, and subsides into displays —to be exposed in the museums along with fossils and artifacts, or to be scalpelled in laboratories in proximity with guinea-pigs and paranoias. Where the study of human religious experience is genuinely

*'comparative religion'— I, the author, having made some small contribution in this field, may speak, at the least, with understanding of its intents*

such, having for its aim the understanding of what of inner truth men have discovered in their world, there it is all in dignity and value that any mind's task should be; where it is adjunct to the labors of the missionary, it is grateful to all who prize honorable records; but where it falls away into a mere chaptering of what in the book-catalogues is known as 'curious', or into a fustian for the covering of sociologizers' impecunities, there it is least among sciences and less than any theology in respectability .... yet the colleges clamor for it!.... As for the psychology, here are breviaries made over into statistics, confession done into psychanalysis; here are necromancies, exorcisms, possessions, shoutings, all graphed and charted and doctored to taste; and here disembowellings interpreted as revelation .... murk and magic and Merlin's chants .... and the colleges clamor for it!.... It is thus that religion becomes a subject; and that ever it was a life is forgotten and forsworn. What it gives of the truth is just that which the nodule of chalk gives of the pulsing glories of the life that swam in Cretaceous seas.

*'psychology of religion'*

IS IT LESS than the truth, one whit less, that if religion is to be self-faithful and real, it must also be faithful unto all things, and itself a gnosis and a wisdom? Is it a thing that can be studied with instruments, pried into light and tooled into exhibition, or should *itself* be the instrument which can

*is Christianity real?*

give understanding, there where understanding is hard to win? Is religion a darkness, upon which the light of science is to be cast, or yet an illumination that may pierce the blacks of this cavernous world, impenetrable to physical or to mathematical knowing?.... Unless it be such, it is only one of Time's vagrants, muddying the thresholds of true knowledge; but if it be such, then there is no gift of our souls more precious. This is the sole prolegomenon that can make its study of man-worth, which, when the churches abnegate it, all is surrendered.... *Is* Christianity real? And all men's devotions—are they real and living devotions? or are they lunacy and disease and mind's monstrosity, out-topping disaster, to be closeted away where man has forgotten his humanity and the obscenities reign kinged by Unreason? In this question there is no distortion of the business: it is asking of the very Keys of Peter, if truly keys they be. Nothing in our world is religiously more desperate than just this fact, that men have come to look—so many men, so many,—upon human religious experience as *a thing to be explained,* and not as *itself the explanation,* regal over all. Can one who will consult but the glamors of history fail to perceive that every apex of human achievement, every culture training to its summation, has in the full made of its religion the height of its self-understanding? What is Egypt, China, India, but a religion? What Greece, —art and letters, polity, philosophy,—but a splen-

*so far as history shows the 'categories of reality' are the religions of men*

didly unified cult of the many-templed mind of god-like man? And of Christianity .... we have followed for a shadowy hour, here in this book, its Jesus and its Trinity, struggling into the lives of men, and period by period rendering them back with at least a bettered reason. The Past, in its circumference and its lines, portrays men with no higher disclosures than their religions have given them to unite into consistencies the multiform currents of their experience of this world; the Past has shown no reason that has been so greatly convincing as have been faiths. That these have been changing, new garments with newer days, why question? We expect change in dress and habitat, art and science; and indeed change is another name for living. But that amid the change there is no reality of religious experience, reality of the world-sustaining type, or yet that this reality—whatever else it may have thrown to the surface—has not marched with the noblest that men have found out, let him who will look with open eyes answer, Nay, nay. There are many hells in religious experience, as there are hells in other modes of knowledge; and it may be that the religious hells are the most tormented. But it is likewise true that for all things which we name most beautiful (strangely, we *do* name them beautiful), all tenderness and sweetness and grace, all fortitudes and strong exaltations, all sublimities of eye's vision and of mind's thought, in the Past their sanctions have been from religion.... Religion has been

*religions are the gauges of men's understandings of life*

*reason,* in a degree in which no other of our wisdoms has touched our understandings; it has been reason and faith and truth, kindling into one flame all the fuels of the enterprise of living, flashing to vital form, giving their glories to the civilizations that have come and passed on this temple-strewn earth. And is it now gone by? . . . . coffined, nailed. . . .

**Moral Reality**

THINKING is choosing (this is Milton), and living also is choosing. In its most primitive forms organic life is selective: plants storing their chlorophyll, as it were against the waste and wintry dissipations of solar radiations; cellules the most delicate developing integuments tough to protect their metabolisms from the bites of destructive energies; animals, in turn, living and growing and multiplying upon sustenant powers won from the wastrel sunlight by the tenacious resistance of the plant-world. It is as if the very forces of life were leagued to exact some temporal reprieve from fated dissolutions, which they are potent to do just through their powers of taking and rejecting. Who knows if the whole chemistry of the universe be not of this character, and the subtlest physics of the atom—*form,* defying the ravages of an ever-threatening cosmic evanishment, defying a dissipation of energies that should mean the chill death of all things, of stars and suns no less than of men and their patterning fancies? Somewhere in the midst

*doctrines change—now few are secure either as to the conservation or the dissipations of energies*

of this fighting Physis, this Nature which agglomerates within itself concord and dissidence, form and matter, cosmos and chaos, each relentless,—somewhere within it or above it, there is an Ordering Thing, or Power, or Force, or God (many are its names) that uplifts structure against ruin and pairs death with resurrection, and as often as worlds are swallowed into the belly of Gloom again it calls and commands their regurgitation. To him who beholds, Nature is an image of consummations and dissolutions, dissolutions and consummations, be they mortal, be they stellar .... even as a great sea it lifts and subsides, lifts and subsides, and never may it remain glassed in the dead calm, for the Commander of Tides is above, and the long swell breaks into white-caps which deliver their spume to the hasting winds. So the hand of God, uplifted over death; so his whips, relentless upon the whining Deep....

*Energy, Law, Will, Providence, Nous, Idea, Demiurge, Brahm*

Image? Exactly. Every *last* word is an image. And this image is at least as fair to the facts of men's experience as any faint-flown formula of the number-ridden mind. Nay, it is fairer; for it does permit that we see in the world what assuredly we find in our living actuality, and that is a *moral* structure. Whatever more the world may be, none can truly say that it does not embrace what for us is better and worse, and what for us is desire or disgust. Now these words of themselves mean choice. They mean that in some actual sense, apart from all

*moral structure*

determinisms and choice-denyings, there exists, real with the real, in the very substance of Nature, agencies of selection that are not only path-distinguishing but are also prompted by attraction and by repulsion, by love and by animus. The situation is *not* mechanical; it is emphatically moral; and this is to say that it describes a freedom in the only sense in which freedom can have meaning, and that is as expressing the existence of such a thing as character. Now men do not *have* characters; they *are* characters; and the same may be said of civilizations, and perhaps of worlds. A character is a mode of action, of conduct; and being modal it is selective, either of its own or through another's option,—though primarily it is self-selective, since our understanding of it is our own inside information about ourselves, as men. Nor is there here any question deriving from theories of the *pre*-formation of selves, such as anamnesis, or innate ideas, or *a priori* forms, or heredity, or any such myth; for all of these are simply methods of defining the constitution of the creature found; they are not his discovery. Understanding of moral reality is keyed in with the perception that life is as a matter of fact a choice-making process (or episode, if you like), and that the choices get their impulsions from the *kind* of being, the character, that moves to make them. If anyone here would ejaculate,—Aha! so the *character* determines!—then, we should reply, To be sure! what else should? for the character *is*

*character is moral cause*

the free agent: no man is consumed in his petty facts....

Now, of the World may not this be true, also? And does not Christianity say it?....

INDEED, indeed, is it not time that we abandon the cult of the Milesians? For Thales said of the All that it is Water; and another answered back, Nay, it is Air; and a third, with subtler wit, a Burning rather! whereat, shrewd-guessing, the fourth made signs the meaning of which was Number; and after him came one who thought to outcount his Chaos of Atoms!.... Therein is the sum of Greek naturalism, and of ours. Sometimes we are saying that the All is a pocket of stardust; or again that it is a race of time with eternity, like clock-hands pinned to the circuit of one dial; or that it is a syllogism, neat with self-abstraction; or a crush of sense; or a numbered ditty plucked where no strings are; or a vortex of self-deforming space, age-blown from naught unto naught. These are the descriptions given by our philosophies and our sciences; and all are Milesian, all are simplifications that can be no more than emaciations of any truth worth getting,—odd reversions back toward childish loves of symmetries and building-blocks. Can any man whose soul has been wrung with an hour's passion or been lifted into but an instant's cloud-rift vision of the blue, can any dream that even this

*Anaximenes*
*Heraclitus*
*Pythagoras*
*Democritus*
*Materialists*
*Temporalists*
*Absolutists*
*Realists*
*Matheticists*
*even Einstein's physics rests for its persuasion upon the law of parcimony—that truth is one, and simple*

fleck of human truth is dispensed by such credulities? Nay, the All—if there be an All—must be capacious of its meanest particulars .... of little human days, with their tasks and their frolics and their tears, no less than the galaxies that bob like sightless jellyfish through seas of vacuity. The net of reason is too loose of mesh if all the shining things escape it.

*what mechanism implies*

But the World is not simple, nor man's a lone and lost intelligence but just awakening to the vastness of the frozen solitudes into which chance has thrown it for its fatal hour. Even were we to grant to its logical fill the claim that mechanic forces alone are time's substance, and the one prime intelligible, even so we should find ourselves in no simple cosmos, but rather in a chaos, beyond computation complicated with confusion. Astronomers have been saying to us that their instruments disclose, here about us, subsensible effluvia, filmets of light, sprung from their star-clusters when Earth was in her Carboniferous, to be skyless wanderers through all the swirling ages that have intervened: already avoyaging when the first blinking amphibian stretched his vermicular form on the steaming muds, there at the lush marge of mingling sea and soil; myriad-distant from their source when flowers bloomed and birds invented song; broken perhaps into vagrant pellicules, or carried on tides of rippleless ether, when the forest crouched from the ravening of the sabre-

tooth or the Great Ice rose up to give the mammoth his tomb. . . . *But!* if the mechanist's symbolism be true, if, in fact, every fetid yawn of the amphibian, every fragrance of the flower, sweetness of bird-song, tiger's yell or brute blare of suffering beast or man, must also be a flesh of unwastable energy, treasure-chested within the one Real which is the World's great box,—*then,* not alone the mazy lumens of incommunicate galaxies must wander space-age to space-age, aimless and unreturning, but each of these animal realities (energies now) must be alike unrelinquished by time, each of these, and all of these, and all that all worlds and all times can add unto them, must likewise be conserved in its meaningless vagrancies,—aye, every blessed moment of man's uplifting and every black hour of his damnation, his vices, cruelties, hates, horrors, along with the other, *all* are living yet in their unsought hells! The World-Box will be a greater than Pandora's with ills and obscenities, even if angels of hope may be there also,—jammed and dinned and gummed together, every agony and every ecstasy that can crowd into the Black Hole! . . . . Remember, that chiseling logic demands this, also, as its thinkable, if we are to accept as glib truth the mechanist's Law of Conservation. No; the image is not simple.

*Euclid to Einstein*

Newer conceptions of the Physis do not in contention alter the inference. From the surveyor's

geometry of Grecian times on to the theory of relativity in our own, the chapters are sequent, moving like a sorites from their initial premiss. The founding assumption of Greek physics is that *there is rest as well as motion* in observed Nature. As for the fact that Earth was chosen as the body at rest, the Pou Sto for all determination of motion, this was only an accident of observation; and when Copernicus (the Greeks had suggested this, also) shifted Earth's dignity to the Sun, there was no alteration of physical theory; it was still Euclidean. No less was it Euclidean even when Newton, with a genius for abstraction, asked only of space that it be rest and of time that it be motion, and out of two vacuities evoked the Machine. But light troubled the deeps, and rest awoke into an ancient ether (a Greek thing, too) gathering to itself fields magnetic and electric, disturbing its repose as with luminous dreams and faint-conscious breathings. Then came the last abstraction: *all* is light, *all* breath! Time and space are indeed an æsthetic, but transcendental of nothing; they are bound in one, and it is a one which knows neither simultaneity nor discontinuity; the old distinction of *same* and *different* is lost to it; motion is all in all, and that motion is itself but a spectral luminosity (for *observer* there must be), like flowers blooming upon a silver screen,—*only,* there is no screen: the Physis is the All, a great flash that is *in* nothing and has no *before* or *after;*

*Greek physics*

*Anaximander*

*Riemannian physics*

spaciously it is unspaced, timefully it is timeless. .... The Cosmic Egg of the Orphics is strangely restored as the wheel of thought swings through its cycle.... There is one addition, from an opposite pole of consideration: the infinitesimal worlds which to us are atoms are themselves coming into being and passing; there where the inter-stellar darks seem quietest, the Physis is forming and transforming as from an inner fecundation.... energy *not* conserved, but creative and living!.... *Nothing is at rest,* save it be in the thought of man.

*Millikan's interpretation of the activity of 'cosmic rays', correcting at last the absurdity of theories of uncompensated degradations of energy*

There are two profound restorations of the natural man's naturalism in these latest theories. For in them the world becomes once more a proportional of man and his life, and the Universe, ceasing as some vastly august and indifferent container, resumes an almost Mediæval concentration upon the embodied wayfarer, Man. In the flash of energy which is the relativist's Physis—time, space and motion interpenetrating,—all that can be known as real must be so with respect to some observer *within* the All—himself a moving spark, but through the act and fact of his observation then and there the world's center. For us this means that some seeing man (or God) *is* the core of every reality and of every cosmos; the stature of his thought, in this its hour, is from earth to sky, and from skies to hyper-Uranian horizons of time-shot extension. There is no Pou Sto except it be in the soul of Archimedes,

*the newer physics implies a restored doctrine of the proportionality of man*

*alpha (α) is symbol for the first transfinite cardinal; omega (ω) is symbol for the whole number of finite ordinals, which is infinite*

but being there the number of its co-ordinates is the number that is Infinity,—alpha and omega. Thus is the proportionality of man, as Pascal foresaw must be, made dramatic in the world's midst, and for even physical truth the center. Man's bones; man's muscles; man's eyes; man's observing moments (we have said it),—these are the measures and the keys for all that the reason of *l'esprit géométrique* can disclose of the reality which mathematics may invent or physics graph..... Unless, indeed, the other restoration may be on the verge of a greater than physical truth. For it holds at least the suggestion of metamorphosis, and of a theory of a transfiguring World that is quick with vital significations. It may be, after all, that the World is not a mechanic thing—like some huger babe's toy,—but is a growing and living thing. Who can know? And is not this a return? *Nature* meant 'birth' and *Physis* meant 'growth,' when first these terms were applied to "that which the Sophists call 'a cosmos' "; and these first true christenings were direct from men's sense of what the All must be, because within themselves their physis is not less than a birth and a growth. Plato, *in Timæo,* grandly rejects the mechanical symbol, and says rather of the Physis that it is an All-achieving Animal, which itself is ensouled by the Anima Mundi. This is not Plato's last word in regard to reality, and Raphael's high scenario is vivid with a truth perhaps deeper than the painter knew, where it pictures the most endowed of philosophers, clasping the

*perhaps the Physis is itself creative*

*Xenophon's phrase*

*παντελὴς ζῷον, ζῷον ἔμψυχον*

*School of Athens*

*Timæus,* but with finger raised to indicate yet loftier understandings.... Thus, time willing, Euclidean physics is wholly everted, and its World disclosed as a living creature (so Plato) "endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God." *Timæus 30b*

**Metaphysical Explanation**

ONCE AGAIN the image of the World returns into an image of life. But life, in all its organic modes, is a selective activity, taking and rejecting; and in all its psychical modes it is a moral action, choosing for the sake of an object of desire, and of a good that is seen or sought. And therefore also, since it is an action and a selective action, shaping its deed from moment to moment, it is in a third disposition a transforming and transfiguring and in this sense creative action. Thus the World itself (where we are to picture it with the best fulfillment of reason) is to be likened most truly to a *living;* and this living is a *selective action;* and this selection is understood only as a quest for the Good, and so as a *moral quest;* but the moral quest is meaningful only in its effects, and these are as *transformation* and *transfiguration,* following the patterns which discoveries of the Good may make clear. All this is within the complexity of any world which truly we may know as a life, making of our own realities the fullest of the measures that to us are of avail.

*the World is not to be summed from an addition of abstractions, but must be 'taken' as in reality a complex*

These words are abstract and full of question, and piled together they seem blown with sound and

*the categories*

hierophantic assumption,—as do all remote formulæ. But restore them, step by step, to the literalities of human experience, and they will not be found false to their trust. Let us take them, one by one; and *life* is the first. "Life is an action, and not a quality."—Aristotle was saying this, and near twenty-three centuries of thinking have only brought us back to its new-stating; yes, even in Aristotle's own mode and context, for he was saying it of life in its dramatic and tragic aspects: *tragedy,* he said, is the image of life, and there was only for Shakespeare to add that the World is its stage. And have not the Christian centuries set forth these truth-sayings, in a manner startling, and beyond dream? We shall return to this.

(1) *life*

Now the second of our terms is *selection,* and touching this term there is every kind of cloudy disorder in men's thought, before all in the talk of psychologists. It is with *mind's* selection that we must begin and end, for the mind's is the most complex selective action that we know; and nothing less than the most complex can give us measure or reason. In our own embodied minds each hour is selective; this we understand; as also we understand that among such hours some are more tensely selective than others; and the most tense are likewise the most creative. It is only in thinking of these creative hours that we can make at all vivid or intelligible, the images of physical life which the wide sweeps of evolutionary time lay out before us. The

(2) *selection*

*psychologists have never escaped their own fallacy: but are even yet obsessed with the notion that description of the bodily instrument is mind's description: every page of their texts implicitly denies this*

growth of each great organic kind, we say, age into age, represents the unfolding of a vast idea—its species, genus, order, division,—without the sum of which no particular is to be understood. Sometimes such ideas rise in their successive forms before us with a quite imperious fullness; as in the great Class of the Cephalopoda, primary in Orthoceras, simple and primitive and self-sown in Silurian seas; sweeping on into the intricate and beautiful Horns of Ammon, jewels of Mesozoic strands; and in our own day surviving in squid and octopus and chambered Nautilus. Millions of years, and every play upon the primal idea which fancy could dictate or invention discover—and none other to render them reason save life's form-rich energy! But the cephalopods are only the highest class of the Mollusca, where-among, in varieties uncomputed, profusion outcastes profusion as the seas of the ages shift with their vital freights; and in turn all this is only a tide-borne preface to the genera that shall walk on lands, heavy-lumbering or fleet with grace, forming and transforming. Evolution is a term that is glib enough nowadays, and geneticists aplenty, now with statistics, now with chromosomes, are laboring with its accounts. But in the end, it can have no convincing image that is not framed within the fundamental one of taking and rejecting and transforming, under a rule of selection that is governed by such a 'higher' and a 'lower' as we men in our own creative thought best know. Only in such

*the Cephalopoda*

*hologenesis (vide supra, p. 97, margin) reads like sober sense after intoxication (as Aristotle says of the Nous of Anaxagoras),—though it gives frame, rather than cause, of evolution*

a panorama as can hold Silurian to Pleistocene in one moment of contemplation can evolution have any reality.

(3) *moral values*

Now the root and brief of all such reality is the 'high' and the 'low' which give meaning to selection. And these as in our own lives we understand them have no significance save as values. There are things 'high' in our mind's thought because they are complex with vital form, architecturally structural and dramatically sequent: we take our images of Truth from these. Again, there are things 'high' because they surprise us into delights of clear-seeing, penetrating like sun-shafts or lambent and fancy-free: and in such are our images of Beauty, which is also an understanding. 'High' also, and most fully, are all those which we name Good, of which the greatest are not instruments, but ends and purposes concerned with our communions, men's minds with men's minds, and men's souls with God. .... Whatever our local judgements in such a matter, the historic judgement of mankind is as here stated. And this, in its measure-giving, is *moral* reality.

(4) *transfiguration*

Last in our series is *transfiguration,* in intent embracing all of these others. For a world which is living and selective and in its guidance governed by the sense of high and low, can be always and only a transforming world. Nay, it is a transubstantiating world, each moment new created from the core. Its pasts are its rejections—all that multi-

tudinously, moment on moment, sinks into recession and is lost in the blank. Whereas that salvage which continues on, living, and is in a sense preserved, is none the less preserved only with the illumination of a newer thought: a memory is never its remembered hour; *that* is beyond restoration. Wherefore indeed we shall say that the *body* of reality, and the whole of the Physis, is continually and everlastingly being renewed, following like a shadow the thought of which it is the phantasm, and like thinking having all its being in the fact of its renovation without cessation, of its transfiguration, its instant creation. Such a process is the most complex thing that we know in our own experience and it is the highest fulfillment of our own moving lives, there where spiritually they may be moving. So also the world's actuality is as Incarnation, incarnation under moral guidance, measuring high and low, better and worse, with the never-realized image of perfections for its planet-guiding Sun. . . . Yes, we are returning once more to our father Plato, and with him saying that naught is real and meaningful except it be under the sun of that other than the phantasmic world, whereof the one luminary is the Good.

*truly the 'real' is the 'significant'*

TIME AND SPACE, taken together, are in two and distinct manners descriptive of the world. Conceived as continua, whether separate or con-

**World-Stage and World-Drama**

joined, they are means of computing the Physis, and have no meaning except as membered within it. If space be one system and time another, as in the clas-

*in classic physics*

sic physics, then they are helplessly in contradiction; for every *now* of space is completely filled, a plenum to its last cube; and every yesterday is a non-existent; the reality of absolute space knows neither past nor future; its reality is a *now,* rigid, crystal. But also for such a scheme every temporal lineage is a plenum, with no crevice for an inter-wedging bit of space in any instant of its motion; so that absolute physical time could never fan out into a spacious world. The classical physics, feeling the presence of this contradiction, eliminated time (substituting therefor a dimension called conservation) and rested for its science upon cubes of space or upon tetrahedrons, as had the ancients; it was still the physics of the Greeks, but troubled with the arrow of Zeno. .... But again, if space and time be taken with the

*in the newer physics*

newer physics as one continuum (made complex by the incorporation of time as one of its dimensions, but simplified by the unification of the two frames of motion), still there is no reality save as computation. Once more the plenum is irreducible, and true change is beyond thinking; anywhere is everywhere, and any time is everlasting.... The Physis, in either science, is a situation, fixed and beyond modifying, which can never be known except as a system of coordinates and of computable functions. And yet even for such knowledge there must be the

*observer,* immersed within the space-time whole, and it is only with respect to his dimensionless moment that this whole can be other than a structureless blank; *his* time, his observational *life*-time alone can give the world reality, and this reality will arise and will pass with his act.

*time-space of history*

Now this other time and space, which is the observer's, innerly, gives that whereby, first, the world can become *a History.* Foundationally it is formed within a time which has the modes of our pulse and our breathing and growing bodies, and within a space whose modes and dimensions are of our eyesight and our locomotions. This we have said, and here we return to it; for in it is the physical truth of the incarnation. Such sciences as geology and biology, where at all they deal with sequences and evolutions, have just such reality as in man's history or men's biographies may be given us; and in each and all, this is within the time-space of bodily sense and of perceptual understandings. Now in this, the time-space of our direct experience, there is always drama, but never any Physis; for in History there are no equations, and apart from equations the Physis cannot exist. Events are the true substances of this History; and the mode whereby they take shape is that of ceaseless transformation. Every past is a thing completed and gone, and forever gone; and every present is a vast and dense fulfillment, having no opening for intrusion into its structure; but shattering into its future. This is surely

*events are substances*

*necessity and possibility*

the description of our perceived historic world; and we name its pasts *necessity,* and its futures *possibility,* and its present the space-enclosed *event,*— though if we think carefully, we perceive, too, that this very space-framed Event is already tombed into the past with the act of its perception, and is the reflection and echo of the act fulfilled. Space, therefore, is but the evanescent crystallization of the moving reality, like a scale each moment falling from the eye, and the whole space-bodied universe is the procession down into the Naught of the fantoms of creation.... For, tell me, as I walk above the marls of long-spent seas, and curiously lift the freed fossil that tells how once here there bloomed in the waters the waving sea-lily whose stem and calyx are now but stony beads, am I in aught restoring the past, the life, the event that was? Nay, where is there space for this past in any cranny of my reality sense-perceived or sense-imaged? *Where* (if there be any meaning in the question), where in any real space is there room for any fraction of the past? Where are my own receded hours, and where are the snows of yester-year! There is no topography that can find them except in the remembering soul, and I and all men who would seek to stablish them as perceivedly real are like the false prophets in the pouch of Hell, blind-marching with face to reins.

*....mais où sont les neiges d'antan?*

*'Inferno,' XX*

*the World is drama*

But within the transfiguring soul there is perpetual drama, with memory and prophecy in each episode, and significance for its truth. It is of

course fact, so far as we men are concerned, that the plays of structured events which are our own lives, are broken and incomplete: they emerge as from naught; they fade as into naught. Our finite realities are curiously to be likened to the ascension of an ever-consuming stair: behind us and below is the great conflagration for which our names have been Nature and Fate, and above us is the murk which we call the Future, and because there is a wavering reflection, from the fire below on into the smoke above, we have a meager illumination, as upon the few steps which we have just abandoned, and which now are falling into ash, and upon the few treads that seem to rise solidly before us, but only for a little way, into the unseen. This is the *image* of the structured world which we perceive; but the great and unabandoning fact of it is that we do know it, solidly and centrally know it, to be *an ascension.* While we live we feel ourselves to be climbing; and within our lives there is nothing keener or more foundational than this sense of sense, this convinced upwardness of human living. Beyond and above the cloud, there is another light, that of the Good, and we are mounting in its direction: if there be any key that we know to any cosmos and truth, this it is. Our name for it is faith.

*Heraclitus said that the world is afire, but he failed to see that direction governs the conflagration*

.... May there be other structures, other bodies to reality, even for ourselves, than these that momentarily are cast into our Forgotten and consumed in that nether fire? Are men mortal but for once?

*incarnation and reincarnation*

and are worlds naught save the shells of mortality—like the beaded fossils in the marls and chalks? And are the souls of us also but as dreams? webs flown and shredding? These are questions which root into religions, and into that source of humanity which gives faith its hopes, and to hope adds loves. In the Physis there is naught to deny it, nor in the History, nor in the embodied Life which is a mortal's: each of these is like a vision, evoked and fading; or like the echoes of an immemorial music; or like the flutter and delight and broken tragedy of a moth.... and *all* of them seem expectant of meaning, for which a *world* must be capacious, if world it be. Therefore we shall say that space is as a vast darkness perpetually consuming the far-flung splendors of the cosmic panorama; and that time is like a great silence into which the symphonies of creation are forever subsiding; but of the World, that it is a writing: frailly the mind of man is its reader; but whose is the hand that can inscribe a Universe upon Eternity?

**God's Action**

PRAYERS that men have prayed are many and strange. Human history, at least, has been chanted and prayed and sacrificially celebrated through hour after hour and year on year of its misty pasts,—as if some hid endeavor had from its brute beginnings been lifting and uplifting within it, striving to break through imprisoning soils, out into

a light. If it respond to no actuality, no phenomenon is more outrageous with impossibilities than is man's long yearning after the spiritual. It is bizarre beyond nature; and the naturalistic explanations of it, from Hume onward, move all among those infantilisms of thought with which, at times, even the most learned console the ineptitudes of reason. To say that religion is born of fear or wonder or appetites or the glamor of dreams or the intoxicant congress of human bodies—all such sayings are the pulings of thinking, out of all calibre that should be man's.... "Mystery-Being! I am a man here below. I am hungry. Help me!".... This is the prayer called primitive, and it may indeed have for its occasion an hunger, whether for food, whether for comfort and guidance; but that it is no more than the plaint of a starved cat or a cowering cur....! You also, reader, may see the visions of them, counting the years with their supplications, writing in graphs and glyphs, in burials and sepulchral emblems, in altars and fanes, in mutilations and torments and their bodies' blood, in art, song, poetry, the throbbings of the dance and thunders of a thousand drums.... unremittingly writing man's longing adoration of the Mystery-Being without whom his life can find no ease.... or yet fiercely, his cartel of defiance to that cloud-masked Other, hawk-like above his despairs! There *is* something that may be with or against him—he has known it, in the deep wells of his knowledge, he has known it from the first....

*'The Natural History of Religion'*

and has any other knowledge had more part in the making of a man of him? Look at them, from the dawn-dusks of human times: half-brute Neanderthals scooping out graves with their Chellean picks for bodies that had never yet been able to swing the head back and face the heavens square; ice-age Magdalenians imprinting their cave-temples with finger-stump hands, for what gods mutilated time has forsworn remembrance; the untouched multitude of the dead of uncounted centuries, world-wide, crouched in the attitude called 'embryonic', there in their poor tombs awaiting to be born again from the womb of Earth the Great Mother; urns of cherished ash, and the orifice for libations .... can this imagination of ours be their one resurrection, this and the glass shelf and catalogue of the museum? .... Men have prayed strangely, and to many gods clothed in dream-spun, and at the feet of idols wetted in blood, and before altars made lovely with flowers. It is no one or simple motive, but a seeking and an imaging and a birth of understanding accompanied by labors and pangs.... We call it Superstition, and make grimace, and point superbly to a newer idol: this, we say, is *our* mother, and her name is Nature, and her ritual a service which is science. As if poetry were not! nor truth, ever, where men reason with their hearts!.... But I have been alone, in a canyon of dead men, with the evening, and the dusk near; and from a far escarpment, where the last sun might be lingering, I have heard

*Neanderthals and Magdalenians*

*superstition*

the sudden tremor of the drum, and a man's voice, singing. I knew that he sang in a speech that must pass, thither where wander all forgotten words; and I knew that his song was but as a broken fragment of molded clay, saying what men's thought had been. .... "Farewell, my Father, the Sun! Farewell, whither thou goest! Thou dost leave us with many thoughts, with parting reflections many" .... But to me, in that song of one lone man is more of the everlasting wisdom than in all the ringing æons of the stars.

*the Great Myth*

BEFORE Christianity was there were Christians, and in many religions not founded by our Christ. This is not said with first reference to ritual analogies; for, although there is no Christian sacrament and probably no Christian feast without its close parallels in the rituals of other faiths, yet it is not the ritual that is the fire or fuel of any. Nor is it said with respect to the outward, or physical and historical drama with which each faith imaginatively clothes itself; there is many a prophet and teacher, in the Old World and the New, and in times before and after the Advent, who has been hailed as Messiah and imaged as a Christ, and the vicarious sacrifice has assumed forms which it is a dread to remember: there is no Dantesque procession of mutilated souls that can match the grim pageants of its agonized victims. But even here—

*not God could save them*

as *he* mounts to the sacrificial block painted with the horrid mask of some black Lord of Vengeance, or *she,* muted with terror, in a mockery of flowers and golden ornaments, to become the bride of Pluto,—*even here* is a striving of the mumbling mind of man to compass a meaning that is unconsolable in his soul, save it find its revelation. Religion is not to be understood except through a sunlight of understanding penetrating enough to lay clear the impulse that asks man to escape himself and redeem himself and purify, and in some manner to find out a *life* that is his, bettered and transfigured. That his mind has strayed, frightfully.... is this more than the mark of his desperate need?

*the Christs*

....A catalogue of the Christs and their redemptions could be only a sonorous echo intoning the past, like a long litany of the saints. They are older than Osiris, more remote than Montezuma or Manabozho, more enveloped in prayer perchance than even the Compassionate One, he, Asia's most-worshipped. Who knows their myriad origins? who can count their incarnations, from beyond the waters of Lethe? It is not this, the pictured procession, that gives their meaning; any more than today's sun-painted mountain range, earth-rooted, cloud-lifted, can be the meaning and reality of those temporal hills; force, we say, force seismic or isostatic, molds and dissolves the fluid crusts of earth, which are its phenomena and are shaped in its unrelinquished grip; and need we say less of that which

grips men's souls into reverberant forms? It is, yes, spiritual force—applied in this world,—expressed in this world,—and perchance this world (could we only dig deep through the stuff of it) is wholly and only its expression.

*religious truths*

Now of Christianity is there no right in saying that it is an understanding of man's inner truth in some better sense than this can be said of its nearest rivals, of Buddhism or of Brahmanism or perhaps of the Stoic faith of the ancients? Perhaps this is only a question for personal conviction (as certainly it is none for wordy quarrels); and perhaps it is rather one of men's histories, each epic self-sung out of its own conflicts, and for each civilization and culture its own better truth,—as should the Himalayas ask of the Andes which were the nobler, or the Pole demand of the Equator its title to be shaper.

*can the Christian religion itself be a measure of reality, —better than atoms, energies, dialectic moments?*

But in all case, it is a question which we of Christendom must put to ourselves, saying, Does that religion which is ours, and for two millennia has made a life and a law of life for them that are our blood-kin, and has formed us and vivified us and been born into us, does *this* religion represent *our* best truth? Of sciences we say that one understanding is better for one field of facts and another, not wholly consonant with the first, for yet another field; and so long as we are in quest of illumination, we adhere to our faith in both understandings, even if unreconciled, and in all theory that is light-giving. Should we not also do this for any other faith that

is a truth, and ask of it only that it show us our way, and cling to it while it does so, and know that no truth is less than eternal? Christianity is the religion of Christendom, and of that extension of Christendom which we have come to call the Christian Civilization; and now we ask if it be in our lives, ours who are Christian, a truth indelible?

*argument recapitulated*

THERE was a man, Jesus. He came into a world that was already restless in old chrysalides, already fancifully clothing its expectations of life in the imageries of Saviours and Messiahs. He taught quite simply, and died because men's minds are dulled and suspicious. None quite understood his words, but *he* was unescapable, and *the myth* seemed compellingly his native vestment: he *was* the anointed; he *was* the helper, the savior. This could never have been had he had no skill to lift up the fallen and to open the eye of the blind. But such things did he, laying bare the heart of man, and revealing at the core of life an inextinguishable longing for purer understandings and nobler days. Were there no response, had men been helpless to recognize in him no more than a passing face among the many and in that which he seemed to show them nothing that could illuminate their own glooms or direct their strivings, then would he have been one with the nameless and the forgotten. But whether it was because the Fates were shearing his hour

from the past, to begin here a new outspinning, or whether that God the Father whom he named were indeed making his will operative through a life that should be divinity manifest, yet either-wise he came when History should find in him the initial of an age. Thereafter the Western World knew first a Christ the Saviour; and again, in cathedral and in state, bowed before God's Majesty; and again, as time led onward, awoke to the breath of a Holy Spirit,—and the Occident became Christendom unrolled. This is not alone the form, it is also the life of Western History in all that is main in its humanity, and in all that is highest in its glory. The matter has been set forth in this book; it needs no more than recapitulation as its reminder. But of the reality which it bespeaks, that is the world's affair; and intimately it is ours, ours who are of the West.

*has 'Christian Civilization' a future?*

Not for our locality's sake, and not with some view of either asserting or relinquishing what our experience should mean to non-Christian peoples. There have been, and are Oriental Christians, each church following its own fashioning; and there may yet be a Christianity triumphant in the East. But before this may be, it is surely important that Occidental Christendom should understand its own soul; and this Christian Civilization, if genuinely it be Christian, it also should have self-understanding. When such a day comes, if the thing achieved be noble, then it will find its way. This we believe, for

we do have just such a faith in the power of nobility to move and persuade and compel the hearts of men to follow after it. But until that day (for it is not achieved) let the missions be prayers and confessions rather than preachings....

But of the reality which is ours and the world's affair—of the reality which is in Christianity, that is a problem vast and metaphysical....

**Christian Truth**

HERE—as one man sees it—may be indicated this metaphysical understanding which *may* be the truth that is the faith. And first, we shall reject the metaphysics of the Ionian Greeks, splendid in its hour, which says of the world that it is a simple thing—a universe staked out in the deserts of the Abyss and peopled only by its own empty winds. Yes, even if in our own day we have made of the Art of the Machine a cunning to shame the elder gods, we shall know it for what it is;—a cabinet for shows of prestidigitation, a kitchen utensil for men's feedings, a stall for the grooming of their bodies,—are its gifts more? In brief, with those who *can* believe that physical science can give us metaphysical truth,—naïve with the first naïveté of the Greeks,—we have here parted company. There is nothing to say....

*not in naturalism*

But second, that this truth is an intellectual thing, bound up with words and numbers and logics of words and numbers, with all propositions and their

*not in dialectic*

laws of contradictions (verbal, too), and their simplifications through abstraction, and their dialectics, and their absolutisms, and their seas of periphrasis,—with such assumptions, too, we must part company, remembering that of all those who have been endowed with magnificence of mind Plato is first, and that Plato knew when, for truth's sake, to abandon dialectic and to speak in myth: asking of each man that he, in his character of man, be truth's finder-out. . . .

*but in the Drama*

Then we shall come to our own, and say that where images speak (knowing that if we speak at all it must be through images), strongest with truth is *the Drama.* Can the World be less than its action? than its greatest action? And can our world, metaphysically and at the heart of it, be less than the highest action which has touched with illumination our own living? . . . . It is not a simple thing; it is high, and complex, and it is older in man's heart than all memory; and there is climbing in it, ascension by *our* measures. And in all this it is *like* the world.

*its Argument and the Herald's prologue*

*Episode of the Stranger*

There it is, *the Drama.* First, it proclaims birth in the world, a coming into being which is eternally a promise, life's energy ever-renewing. No reality could be, nothing but ghost-being could be, without something like that. Second, there is the pilgrimage, with stoppings by the wayside to quiet thirst and to converse with the drawers of water and to greet all way-fellows. The end of it is understanding, in a

*protagonist and deuter-agonist*

*the Agon*

*Erinyes*

*the Pathos*

*'Purgatorio', XXIII*

*in Italian 'OMO'*

world where many move; for no *world* can be for *one* soul only, even God's. Third, there are solitudes, and prayers perhaps. It is a world that must strengthen men; it is a world in which there must be self-finding and self-steadying; there is conflict in it; there is peril. Nay, hell is in it! Do we think to escape peril ostrich-fashion? It is *that* kind of thing, this dramatic reality of the souls of men and stars, that kind of thing in which devils lurk: whether they be chaos or but just the tormenting husks of life, the Thing-flung-afar that refuses to be abandoned, but clings to us and hag-rides us,—why deny what every seeing eye burns with!.... There is the long rote of those who have turned their faces, saying, evil is illusion, hatred is illusion, death and torment are illusion: life and love, milk and honey, these are the World!.... But it is a lie, and a coward's lie. Jesus did not say it; nor do ten thousand quivering crucifixes say it. It is not the Christian truth; it is not the truth of the Drama. .... But this the Drama does say, that after he had been crucified, at the place called Golgotha, which is the Place of the Skull.... Dante, you will remember, gives one image of it that is unforgettable with truth: how the eye-ridges and cheek bones and nasal bones of the cranial front (that part which *is* the skull in image) form the M, and the two blank sockets of eyes, the O and the O of the name for Man's Kind, for Homo,—for Dante understood images, and fates.... that after this, something of

him which disciples had called their companion was buried, but that he himself lived, and eyes were opened to his transfigurations. They were simple men, and they spoke the truth as their vision compelled it, and as the chorus of the centuries has compelled it.... The whole argument is in one passage of the Gospel of St. John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

*the Theophany*

*the Chorus*

*John* 3:16

Such is the Drama, known first in the hearts of all men and times; known second in the life and death of one man; known third as the spiritual scroll of half of man's world for toward two millennia. This is the fact before us. Is its value as a measure of reality less than a meter-stick's? It says of this reality that it is such a one as may generate such a life; it says of it that it is not simple but complex, not meagre but rich and great; it says that life is inwoven with strife and with aspiration, and that it is capable of wisdom and nobility, and indeed that it may be many times transfigured; it says also that there is heaven and hell, good and bad, and one not less in fact than the other; but it says that that which can part the good from the bad is infinitely more vast as measure than can be light-years or star-zones. The name of the measurer is Divinity, and in the Christian world its ineffacable signature is a Cross. That this Cross is the emblem of a faith that is a truth, this it says out of the testimony of

*"new acquist of true experience"*

*measures of reality*

multitudes of lives; and it bequeathes also a testimonial word, to be interpreted as men's lives shall permit: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

*Matt. 28:20*

*the Sign of the Cross*

METAPHYSICALLY, in its core of cores, the World is signed with the Cross. The Christian drama, the Drama of a Redemption up out of the Abyss into an Illumination, this drama touches more and with more of verification the motives and faces of men's lives, gives more of meaning, trues more with their instincts and acts and findings, than does any other form which man's mind has imaged. It is senseless to go to the insensate for sense; it is hapless to turn to abstraction for life or fact; it is an ascetic's self-punishment to make of a cell the house of all nature, physical and spiritual, or to command a universe into a laboratory. We have had these curious delusions, we of the West; and they have brought us philosophies that are sound, and sciences that are legerdemain. But we of the West also have, all along, here in the midst of us, as our keenest life, an image which does more to give the compass of a world than other men have yet discovered. We have called this the Gospel of Christ, and in many interpretations we have builded our civilization and our hourly living upon it. Whatever the future may hold, this has been our one genuine metaphysic, and it alone has given us

to understand what we best know of the world's sublimities and of our truth. If it has shown the depths with the heights, are we the less in understanding? Only, surely only if yet we turn not toward the heights.

*codicil*

WHETHER the Christian faith will make anew a Church that can express its greatness, and once more make Christian Civilization coherently one, that is beyond present prophesying. There are those who sigh for a Restoration, meaning of the Church of Rome; but restoration there can never be while that institution meets every discovery, of heart as well as of mind, with cold negation, and crouches in the tatters of an old magnificence before every wind of revelation. As for the Protestant Churches, none shows sign of a vitality that is more than may be generated by the gregarious warmth of little communities: for where are they open to the greatness of the skies? .... The elder rituals, Roman and other, are as high in the understanding of beauty as any works of mankind, and it would be time's deadliest robbery of the human spirit, where its stored treasures are, if these should die out from neglect or decay through misuse. Probably they will last on in form; probably the little congregations will continue, dividing and subdividing; and long yet, as now, there will be every color of rite and no-rite from High Church

to Quaker simplicity. But as the sects become no better than social or histrionic, they die; and will surely die.... Unless Christendom can recover a faith in its truth, unless it can recover the measures of life that are in its Salvation, knowing this to be at the World's core and from the World's foundation,—unless this, the civilization of the Occident will cease to be Christian, and will fade into its night.

*in hoc signo*

MOMENT on moment, in complexities unthinkable, the worlds crumble into the Void. Each Space is a Nowhere; each Past is a Nothing. The tide of Destruction lifts its consuming deluge eternal from the Deep, and the chilling corses of men and their deeds sink stark and livid into their vanishings. But even as there is a sinking, there is a rising; and this Now, which is our life and God's, lifts into the light of uncounted constellations and of suns ever-renewing. That brightness which is in the midst thereof is of four stars that are four suns more glorious with vision than all that blaze in Empyrean, for they upbear before us, and as their central illumination, the image of a Pattern Man. Our hearts cannot deny him, our lives cannot deny him; for he is the image of what we know Man would be were the grace of it men's to find, he is the divinity for the Form of which man's being is evoked from the Deep and sustained on its flooding tide—into what Futures only faith can guess.

## VIII

EVERY MAN, at the last, must find in his own life his faith. The fullness of testimony is not in words nor in works, but in the understanding which should actuate both and is in itself prompted and stayed by the uniting reasons of mind and heart. All else is artifice: pride of intellect no less than breeze of emotion, both are cunning with deception; neither can become our single trust except with peril of perversion; each in separation develops a monstrosity rather than a sanity of living. But where a man's life, whole in its powers, faces his own days and asks of them their meaning, which is their reality, there the faith emerges which is his participation in the truth. The sum of all wisdom is the rounded understanding of days lived. FAITH

Therefore in confessing certain of the things which the world means for me, I, who am the author writing, will know that what is said can be expressed only imitatingly, and even though it true with another's experience of life this truth can be but as similitude—as one round of the seasons trues with another, yet for each its own budding spring and wintry crystals are beyond replication.... Is there, then, any reason that can make confession better than silence? None, I suppose, except such

an impulse as prompts this whole writing, which innerly is a rebellion against credos which seem to have forgotten their substance and against wordy idols which delude men with the wraiths of knowledge,—or to me seem to do so. And though it be indeed in a sense absurd to attempt to communicate what in its essence is incommunicable, yet we must know, all of us, that meanings are found through indirection, and that thoughts answer thoughts and lives respond to lives even through the darks that divide us one from another,—as if we were borne on the one great sea, and lift upon tides whose comings we may signal to comrade voyagers even while each for himself must feel the swell and for himself make his soundings of the deep.

*Credo*

FIRST I shall speak of those who have been my companions in life. By this I mean partly the lives which are incarnate in perceived bodies, forming my human associates. Had I not faith in their being, faith that each moving body, each changing mask, each heard tone, voice and word, were indeed the expression of a living spirit, and of a being one and human like my own,—had I not such a faith, inexpressibly grounded, beyond stain of doubt, I know that I should be shattered and the house of my mind become a croft for bat-things and lunacies. But I do believe (and you, must you not?) that the

bodies about me are not painted automata nor their utterance mechanically disked from no master-record of thought, but rather that they are, body and word and deed, the quickened expression of living minds; and these are my companions. The bond and substance of my world, all that cements it into a meaning and a reality, is in this faith: minds there are, minds that are lives speaking through bodies, near-whispering, remote-echoing, but never less than *the sense* of the world and the whole anchorage of sanity. Men may mask and mime and children may play make-believe with sawdust dolls, but where any business with life is, there souls must be.... In the British Museum is perhaps the most eloquent confession of faith in the world, the weak-pencilled last words of Captain Scott's notebook ere in Earth's loneliest land the final chill relaxed his fingers—he, to the last, believing in human minds, and their great throbbing world.... Is it necessary to add that every faith in living mind is a laughter directed to the machine-makers and their mockeries of understanding?

*Captain Scott's notebook*

My parents, my brothers and sisters, my friends, my acquaintances hailed for an hour—many among these long gone,—and with them remote persons known only by word or deed; or known, as I fondly trust, deeply and sincerely even if little as I long to know them, from utterances precious to me out of the past; of these latter books are the speech—books

and the loved works of their hands,—all having but the sense of mind and its realities. How can I relinquish my faith in these when suddenly from the formed thing that is its symbol my thought leaps into the presence of their thought, with the swiftness of compelling knowledge? If it be delusion that I know minds, directly (with you, also, my reader, as but my delusion), then with what a metalled thud the world falls flat .... zero!

But yet more than this is my faith. There is another bodied world—which you, perchance, call the *thing,* physical and material,—that to me is also as an utterance and a symbol. Each moment it forms into a token and the succession of its moments is like the succession of the syllables of a discourse, which gains in its meaning as it grows, not out of aggregation of sound but from sequence of sense. Vastly much there is in it that is untranslatable, for it can speak privately and to me (as lovers can, and only to one another), and when I say that I have heard the great plains chanting their epics and the mountains singing like a chorus, I know very well that *my* experience will be for you to superciliously pass, or bite your thumb at in contempt .... yet I ask, not from any faith in me, but only out of honesty with yourself, whence is the loveliness of this fugitive flower, or whence the eternal strength of the hills, and in what actuality do *you* find Nature intelligible? The listlessness of men of extinguishing tribes is the most terrible pathos that we know,

*"I will lift up mine eyes to the hills"*

but the last man in a physical world, some Scott in the final sunset of a life-abandoned planet, could he die heroic?

*we live in haunted worlds*

This first faith of mine has one more article, most difficult to say, most intense with its truth. Even as I find my life to have its living quality as in the midst of a communicant world in which men's minds speak to men's minds through signs and physiognomies, and in which Nature also is real but as being a speech, so again I find that about me and within and communicant there are voices uncounted that come with meaning and visions forming their symbolled presences in many spaces that are not of this physical Now. I shall not dwell upon these things, for I know men's opinions (as I think I know their fatuity); but I should not be honest with my own truth were I to neglect it. They have come as thoughts out of nowhere and as forms beyond premonition, with a glow and a valor and a grace and a terror—many they are, and without ceasing, like a throng in-pressing, and where they are seen, most of them with the countenances of men, .... and I have beheld them act before me my own life, and prophesy it. This physical space does not hold them; my timed past does not hold them; they are in no dimension that I can transmit .... unless it be love and terror, for the drama never ceases to unfold, sometimes with pity and fear, and again with the dear caress, unbodied, of one without whose blessed presence, even though it re-sharpen an un-

*"joy at birth and grief for the dead are better, for these mean love....*

stilled grieving, my life is ever bereft.... Souls I suppose I might call these: the name is as good as any other.

*descensus ad inferos*

DEATH is a man's last solitude. But surely it is not so grim-faced when foreseen as his own withdrawal from this life as when known in his torturing separations from his beloved. For himself, if it were no more than an oblivescence, it might be met without disquiet, or even with a certain security,—for there are horrors, beyond any as yet imagined hell, that might lie beyond the grave. Or for all, if death were to come frequently, and not by rare chance, as the fulfillment of a rounded life, and not with needless suffering, but easily and like a consolation to close wearied eyes, then it could seem as of Nature, and kindly with instinct. But when death comes, as repeatedly it does, and before helpless eyes throttles its victims and wracks their bodies and ruins the manhood and womanhood of your beloved and makes of the tenderness of little children its ghastly prey.... death, the most horrible of wooers, through tortures compelling that they turn to its black caress.... then is it foul and damnable and unredeemedly cruel.... Almost my first-born recollection, I yet but an infant, is of my fantastic terror of the white-faced body of my own mother whose stilled lips mine could not touch, for the fears unnamable that assailed me, seeing what

death wrought ere yet I had learned his name. And as your life, reader, mine also has been shaken and seamed under the assaults of the ravager, and I have seen my friends and kin and my own blood go down where death's injustice was most crying and his torments of body and mind most unpitying; and there was no salvation for them in their hours of suffering; and there is no reconciliation for me. I shall never say, Blessed be the name of any Lord, who gave, who hath taken away, as these were taken. Nay, I have no right to bless any who hath hurt my beloved, nor have I will for it. And if one come saying, Christ died to save them, then I shall answer, and sadly, that he died not greatly enough; for I believe that they suffered more than he, in physical anguish, and my little babe more innocently died. He *could not* save them, though he would,—that I shall answer.

Ah, yes, there may be recompense, somewhere, where God will have gotten the mastery! That is my hope and faith; for I do not believe that God held the mastery here. I do not believe that God is all-powerful or the Good all-prevailing. It has not been so in my life; it is not so in the world that I see. Over against him there is evil and monstrosity, even in the body of the Physis which is our incarnation, and perhaps his, and men honor it with epithets and euphemisms. But I—it may be because of my love for them who have been dear to me, and

*though God be not omnipotent, yet he may be strong to save*

*"il ingegno nella fiamma d'amor è adulto"*

are its victims, though even so love also is a reason and than others a reason more lasting,—still I have faith that God may have been strong to rescue their immortal part, and to lift up their lives, out of the physical thing which held them with cancerous clutch, and to have rapt them, purified, into a more spiritual being. Had I not this faith, I should know myself for a dead thing .... conquered....

*credo in Dominum Jesum Christum, filium Dei*

NOT CONSTANTLY, for my feet walk heavy-shod, yet daily, I see even physical Nature striving to incorporate a sublimity toward which it unceasingly aspires. I shall forget now all analysis of such a thing, for I have said my analytic word, and here I only confess. But you, also,—you must perceive it, in the daily eloquence of beauty, of lovely little things that shine ere they shrivel, and of time-brunting majesties that defy old earth to ruin them; and you will have seen it, too, you with the men who are your kind, in the age-long and unappeasable demand and demand and demand of that terrific thing which is human prayer—a voice that *will* not be smothered by the decays and crumblings and disintegrations of all earthy things. The murmur of it is unremitting in my ears; it is in the roar of living cities, under the rocks of dead deserts; and if I escape it not, can God?.... Therefore I believe that there is a spirit of man which is more real and living than the stars are, and more in time than can

be the everlasting hills. This mortal life is its nurse and its school and its terrible taskmaster, and in part, perchance, even if not utterly, its mad destroyer, —but it is my faith that there is in it also a power to prove itself kingly and conquering, and God-assisted to lift out of its desolations into some surer beauty.... If you would ask reason for this, the monitions of my own life are my reason.

Now of this spirit I behold an image which seems to me to be the height of its truth, for which I know no name that is so befitting as is Christ-like. My understanding of it I have sought to expound. It is not first-born with the man Jesus, but around his personality, time and a world of faiths have made its meanings to cluster, and through him this meaning is surely most communicate. I myself have known men who have suffered for others more than I think Jesus suffered, and more ignobly; and I have known, oh, so many, whose lives have been sacrificed daily and unspeakably for their fellows, and who have found only a pitiful sorrow where any high and triumphant Good would have crowned them with more than Mary's crown; and again I have known souls to be made strong for their trust in His Name. This being so I shall never say that the Christian faith is not the sustainer of nobility, for I know that it is; and of Jesus I shall never say that he was less than a man who had found man's divinity and made it not alone his but for souls whom he never foresaw their finding of divinity also. He was the son

*ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula*

of God, and they God's children in one and the same sense; but in my own faith this is a sense eternal, for it is my measure of measures, and of all signs the one meaning.... I do not say that as a man he was faultless, although in the record I can see nothing that I could wish changed. I do not say that as a personality his was all-fulfilling, for of heart and of mind I owe many an allegiance which makes me glad in the greatness of our humanity. I do not hope that he is one with all that God can be! for I should feel destitute in believing this, and the world would seem shrunken. But I do say that he is inescapable and pursuing, and that in speaking of our dearest love we who are of his Christendom must compellingly think of him.... His image is sunny and still and strong with discovered life and comforting, like the wide dawn of an eternal Easter.

*in unum Deum, factorem cœli et terræ, visibilium et invisibilium*

NOW OF GOD who is our light and leader in the fight which we must wage upon chaos I will say my faith. He is nothing that can be given in definition or can gain from its attemptings. Not arguments as to his existence (which are meaningless) but the experience of him in human life is the affair of theology, or of all speculation. In man's history he is a fact,—nay, he is a whole world of facts, and some we have set forth. First, in this experience God is a worship. Strange and (as men

reckon their reason) rationalistically bizarre is this passion of the human spirit,—but *if* humanity, *then* divinity! Second, God is an idolatry. God is a symbol proclaiming the double intent of every moment of life, asserting that the one reality is that which is significant through the Goodness and Beauty and Nobility (for these are his attributes) in which men set their faiths and in which they find their truths. Third, God is also a revelation. Through him is the Order which is in all intelligibility, through him is the pattern of Goodness, and his truest son is for us the Pattern Man, which we may call the Christ-life, if we so choose, but which never we escape from adoring and which, with some unseen help that we name God's grace, we may perchance in some part live. And is this not giving into God a fourth meaning, and shall we not say that that History, which is the world's Logos, that this is *his* also, and that he is the World's Redemption? For it is God alone who can deliver us from the insufferable senselessness of dead matter, and all the fantastic delirium of this alien Anarchy of Things.

Shall I say it also negatively? for this, too, is my faith and truth. God is man's resentment of the imperfections of his world,—just as science is our resentment of the world's imbecilities. And God is our faith in moral sanity,—just as science is our faith in intellectual sanity, which itself to be sane must be included within the moral. And last, God is

not the conclusion of a syllogism, but the illumination of a vision; he is not a consolation, but an inspiration; he is not a cry of triumph, he is a battle-cry, and the creator of our high humanity!.... God is living spirit, and holy....

*et in Spiritum Sanctum*

*Lumen de lumine*

THIS FAITH I have dared to confess because it is my truth. Living, I am in two worlds, one of which is the world of men. Of that portion of this latter which is called the religious, few of its indwellers, I imagine, will be with me more than remotely; and of that portion which is called the intellectual, few will be with me more than remotely. Indeed, in behalf of what I have said I have no offering except of those convictions which my own life has brought me, whereof this writing is my disclosure to whoso may read. Yet, that I be fair-minded with myself, I wish to add this also, regarding that other world which is my own: within it there is ever the recognition of a central splendor as of a flame insuppressible, and this is the source and glory of all that to me is heroic and noble and altogether lovely; but I were a pretender should I say that I see it clearly or with what for men is understanding, or yet that I can enter in where I believe that others of my fellows have entered in, they with a better wisdom and a purer endowment than is mine; and for my part that presence is afar, even while sole-sustaining, and I myself am most

often on a perilous verge, darkling and faint-illumined, with the abyss black below; and there is my station, battling.... But of the glory, distant soever, I know it for the Celestial Rose, and my Lord's blazon.

THE END

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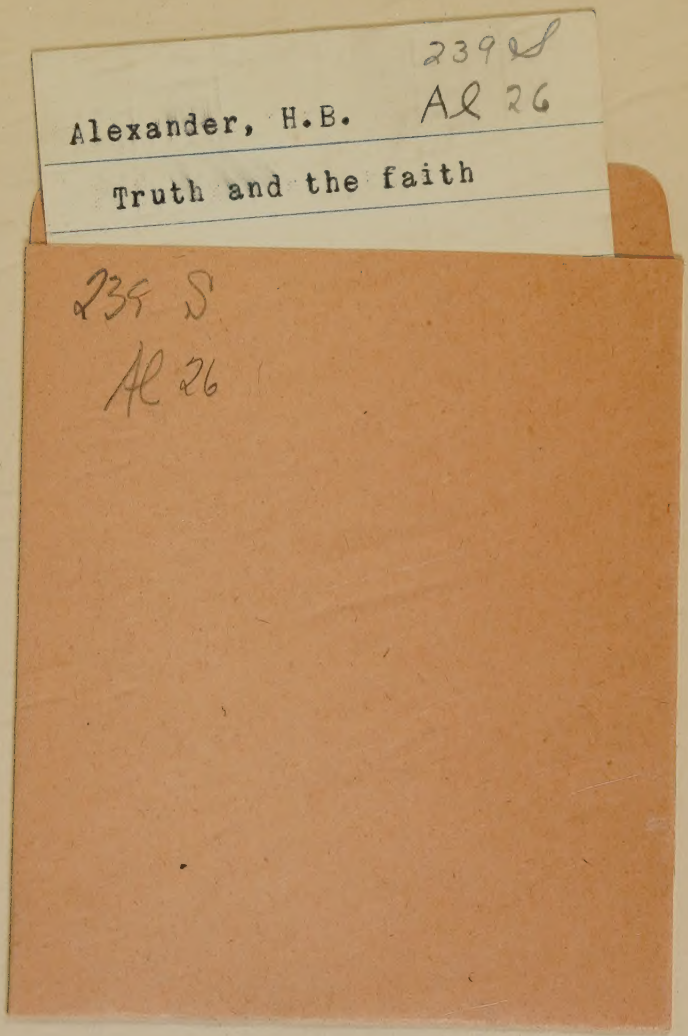
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